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THE LETTERS OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY



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THE LETTERS  
OF  
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

CONTAINING MATERIAL  
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EDITED BY  
ROGER INGPEN

NEW EDITION WITH ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

Vol. II



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VOL. II

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May 3—August 18, 1816

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234. TO WILLIAM GODWIN  
(London)

DOVER,<sup>1</sup>

May 3, 1816.

No doubt you are anxious to hear the state of my concerns. I wish that it was in my power to give you a more favourable view of them than such as I am compelled to present. The limited condition of my fortune is regretted by me, as I imagine you well know, because among other designs of a similar nature I cannot at once put you in

<sup>1</sup> Peacock says, "In the early summer of 1816, the spirit of restlessness again came over him [Shelley], and resulted in a second visit to the Continent." Shelley remained for some days in London awaiting the decision of Chancery. Besides Shelley, Mary and their little boy, William, Clare Clairmont was of the party. Paris was reached on May 8. The journey lay over the same ground that they had traversed on foot nearly two years before, in 1814, through Troyes, and as far as Neufchatel. Here they took another road, through Dijon, Dôle, Poligny, Champagnolles, Les Rousses, to Geneva, where they put up at the Hotel de Sécheron.

possession of all that would be sufficient for the comfort and independence which it is so unjust that you should not have already received from society.

Chancery has decided that I and my father may not touch the estates. It has decided also that all the timber, worth it is said £60,000, must be cut and sold, and the money paid into court to abide *whatever equities* may hereafter arise. This you already know from Fanny.

All this reduces me very nearly to the situation I described to you in March, so far as relates to your share in the question. I shall receive nothing from my father except in the way of charity. *Post-obit* concerns are very doubtful, and annuity transactions are confined within an obvious and very narrow limit.

My father is to advance me a sum to meet, as I have alleged, engagements contracted during the dependence of the late negotiation. This sum is extremely small, and is swallowed up almost in such of my debts and the liquidation of such securities as I have been compelled to state in order to obtain the money at all. A few hundred pounds will remain; you shall have £300 from this source in the course of the summer. I am to give a *post-obit* security for the sum, and the affair at present stands that the deeds are to be drawn in the course of six weeks or two months; and that I am to return for their signature, and to receive the money. There can be no doubt that, if my application in other quarters should not be discovered by my father, the money will be in readiness for you by the time that Kingdom's discounts recur.

I am afraid nothing can be done with Bryant. He promised to lend me £500 on *my mere bond*; of course he failed, and this failure presents no good augury of his future performances. Still the negotiation is open, and I cannot but think that the only, or at least the best, chance for success would be your interference. Perhaps you would dislike to be mistaken for my personal friend, which it would be necessary you should appear, provided

you acquiesce in this suggestion. I am confident that it would be a most favourable circumstance. It is necessary, I must remark, that secrecy should at present be observed.

Hayward has also an affair in hand. He says he thinks he can get me £300 on *post-obit*.

Neither Bryant nor Hayward know that I have left England, and as I must in all probability, nay certainly, return in a few weeks to sign these deeds, if the people should agree, or at least to get the money from my father, I thought it might relax their exertions to know that I was abroad. I informed them that I was gone for a fortnight or three weeks into the country. I have not even disengaged my lodgings in Marchmont Street.

The motives which determined me to leave England, and which I stated to you in a former letter, have continued since that period to press on me with accumulated force.

Continually detained in a situation where what I esteem a prejudice does not permit me to live on equal terms with my fellow-beings, I resolved to commit myself to a decided step. Therefore I take Mary to Geneva, where I shall devise some plan of settlement, and only leave her to return to London, and exclusively devote myself to business.

I leave England, I know not, perhaps for ever. I return, alone, to see no friend, to do no office of friendship, to engage in nothing that can soothe the sentiments of regret almost like remorse, which, under such circumstances, everyone feels who quits his native land. I respect you, I think well of you, better perhaps than of any other person whom England contains; you were the philosopher who first awakened, and who still as a philosopher to a very great degree regulates my understanding. It is unfortunate for me that the part of your character which is least excellent should have been met by my convictions of what was right to do. But I have been too indignant, I have been unjust to you—forgive me; burn those letters which contain the records of my violence, and believe that, however, what you erroneously call fame and honour separate



us, I shall always feel towards you as the most affectionate of friends.

P. B. SHELLEY.

Address—Poste Restante, Geneva.

I have written in great haste, expecting every moment to hear that the *Pacquet* sails.

[Addressed outside],

— GODWIN, Esq.,  
41 Skinner Street,  
London.

### 235. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

HOTEL DE SÉCHERON,<sup>1</sup> GENEVA,

May 15, 1816.

After a journey of ten days, we arrived at Geneva. The journey, like that of life, was variegated with intermingled rain and sunshine, though these many showers were to me, as you know, April showers, quickly passing away, and foretelling the calm brightness of summer.

The journey was in some respects exceedingly delightful, but the prudential considerations arising out of the necessity of preventing delay, and the continual attention to pecuniary disbursements, detract terribly from the pleasure of all travelling schemes.

You live by the shores of a tranquil stream, among low and woody hills. You live in a free country, where you may act without restraint, and possess that which you possess in security; and so long as the name of country

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley and his little party moved by the end of May from the hotel to a cottage known as *Campagne Chapuis*, or *Campagne Mont Alègre*, about two miles from Geneva, near Coligny, on the opposite side of the Lake. The cottage, separated from the water's edge only by a small garden, stood five or eight minutes' walk below the villa Diodati, where Milton, returning from Italy in 1639, had visited his friend, Dr. John Diodati, the Genevan professor of theology. A vineyard lay between Shelley's cottage and the villa, where, haunted by the British tourist and gossip-monger, Byron took refuge on June 10.—Prof. Dowden's "Life of Shelley," Vol. II, p. 14.

and the selfish conceptions it includes shall subsist, England, I am persuaded, is the most free and the most refined.

Perhaps you have chosen wisely, but if I return and follow your example, it will be no subject of regret to me that I have seen other things. Surely there is much of bad and much of good, there is much to disgust and much to elevate, which he cannot have felt or known who has never passed the limits of his native land.

So long as man is such as he now is, the experience of which I speak will never teach him to despise the country of his birth—far otherwise, like Wordsworth, he will never know what love subsists between that and him until absence shall have made its beauty more heartfelt; our poets and our philosophers, our mountains and our lakes, the rural lanes and fields which are so especially our own, are ties which, until I become utterly senseless, can never be broken asunder.

These, and the memory of them, if I never should return, these and the affections of the mind, with which, having been once united, [they] are inseparable, will make the name of England dear to me for ever, even if I should permanently return to it no more.

But I suppose you did not pay the postage of this, expecting nothing but sentimental gossip, and I fear it will be long before I play the tourist properly, I will, however, tell you that to come to Geneva we crossed the Jura branch of the Alps.

The mere difficulties of horses, high bills, postillions, and cheating, lying *aubergistes*, you can easily conceive; fill up that part of the picture according to your own experience, and it cannot fail to resemble.

The mountains of Jura exhibit scenery of wonderful sublimity. Pine forests of impenetrable thickness, and untrodden, nay, inaccessible expanse, spreading on every side. Sometimes descending, they follow the route into the valleys, clothing the precipitous rocks, and struggling with knotted roots between the most barren clefts.

Sometimes the road winds high into the regions of frost, and there these forests become scattered, and loaded with snow.

The trees in these regions are incredibly large, and stand in scattered clumps over the white wilderness. Never was scene more awfully desolate than that which we passed on the evening of our last day's journey.

The natural silence of that uninhabited desert contrasted strangely with the voices of the people who conducted us, for it was necessary in this part of the mountain to take a number of persons, who should assist the horses to force the chaise through the snow, and prevent it from falling down the precipice.

We are now at Geneva, where, or in the neighbourhood, we shall remain probably until the autumn. I may return in a fortnight or three weeks, to attend to the last exertions which L[ongdill] is to make for the settlement of my affairs ; of course I shall then see you ; in the meantime it will interest me to hear all that you have to tell of yourself.

P. B. SHELLEY.

236. TO WILLIAM GODWIN  
(London)

EVIAN, SAVOIE,

June 23, 1816.

[Sunday.]

SIR,

Your letter reached me the moment before I set off on a little tour of the borders of the lake. I write this [reply]<sup>1</sup> from the first post town I arrive at.

<sup>1</sup> "A client of the solicitor to whom Shelley had referred Godwin, as likely to assist in obtaining money, offered to purchase a farm from Shelley for the sum of seventeen hundred pounds; but no progress in the negotiation could be made without a copy of the settlement of 1791, and Shelley was not on the spot to procure it. 'This,' wrote Godwin, 'is the first fruits of your unfortunate absence. Bryant says that he can find you purchasers for other things.'"—Prof. Dowden's "Life of Shelley," Vol. II, p. 20.

You know that we are not on those intimate terms as to permit that I should have minutely explained to you the motives which determined my departure, or that, if explained, you would have judged them with the judgment of a friend. I can easily imagine that you were disquieted by it. But I have ever been most unwillingly the cause of disquiet to you, meaning you all possible good.

I entirely approve of your seeing Bryant, and I think, if no unappreciated circumstances render the farm in question more valuable than he states, that the terms his client offers are unusually favourable. But I think if you undertake the business, you ought to ascertain this. The property need not actually be valued, as the expense of valuation is proportionately immense, but a clearer conception of its value than the purchaser's assertion or even the rental affords, might, I should conceive, be obtained by one so clear-sighted and experienced in these affairs as yourself. But perhaps I am unjust to you to suppose that you would not in all these respects consider my property as my own.

There is a copy of the settlement, as I imagine, at Jew King's, which he said he would sell for ten pounds. Enclosed is a note, which, as probably it is inconvenient to you to pay this sum, directs my bankers to give as much to Mr. Martin. I have put this name, supposing that you would not like your own to be stated.

I dare say you can get the settlement for £5, if, as I strongly believe, it is yet in King's possession. If it is not, I can think of no other resource than Longdill, from whom I conceive that a copy might be obtained on the ground of your having on a former occasion lent me a copy, and my not having returned it, and his having collected all the copies belonging to me, and the person to whom this copy belongs having a right to it. You remember that you borrowed what I now speak of from a law student, that you lent it to me, and that it was never returned. In the present state of the negotiations with

Bryant the utmost care must be taken that no circumstances relating to it transpires. I hope that you were impressed with the necessity of secrecy on this point. Nothing but my persuasion that you will act as if you were, engages my consent to the negotiations.

May I request that if you obtain the settlement that you will cause a copy to be made and keep it for me?

The style of this letter, I fear, will appear to you unusual. The truth is that I feel the unbounded difficulty of making myself understood on the commonest topic, and I am obliged to adopt for that purpose a cold and stiff set of phrases. No person can feel deeper interest for another or venerate their character and talents more sincerely, or regret more incessantly his own impotent loneliness, than I for you and yours.

Remember me kindly to Fanny both for her own and for her sister's sake.

P. B. SHELLEY.

Address still Geneva. I shall have returned in a few days from this date.

[Addressed outside].

WILLIAM GODWIN, Esq.,  
41 Skinner Street,  
Snow Hill, London,  
Angleterre.

### 237. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK<sup>1</sup>

MONTALEGRE, NEAR COLIGNI, GENEVA,

July 12, [1816].

It is nearly a fortnight since I have returned from Vevey. This journey has been on every account delightful, but

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<sup>1</sup> "During his [Shelley's] stay in Switzerland he became acquainted with Lord Byron. They made an excursion round the Lake of Geneva, of which he sent me the detail in a diary. This diary was published by Mrs. Shelley ['History of a Six Weeks' Tour,' 1817], but without introducing the name of Lord Byron, who is throughout called 'my companion.' The diary was first published during Lord Byron's life, but why his name was concealed I do not know. Though

most especially, because then I first knew the divine beauty of Rousseau's imagination, as it exhibits itself in "Julie." It is inconceivable what an enchantment the scene itself lends to those delineations, from which its own most touching charm arises. But I will give you an abstract of our voyage, which lasted eight days, and if you have a map of Switzerland, you can follow me.

We left Montalegre at half-past two on the 23rd of June. The lake was calm, and after three hours of rowing we arrived at Hermance, a beautiful little village, containing a ruined tower, built, the villagers say, by Julius Cæsar. There were three other towers similar to it, which the Genevese destroyed for their own fortifications in 1560.

the changes are not many, yet the association of the two names gives it great additional interest." (T. L. Peacock in *Fraser's Magazine*, Jan. 1860.) Byron left England for the last time on April 25th, 1816, and arrived at Geneva on May 25 (about ten days after Shelley), the two poets met for the first time on May 27. "My route," says Byron in a letter to Murray (June 27, 1816), "through Flanders, and by the Rhine to Switzerland, was all I expected, and more." According to Thomas Moore, Shelley had sent Byron some years previously a copy of "Queen Mab" with "a letter, in which after detailing at full length all the accusations he had heard brought against his character, he added that, should these charges not have been true, it would make him happy to be honoured with his acquaintance. The book alone, it appears, reached its destination,—the letter having miscarried,—and Lord Byron was known to have expressed warm admiration of the opening lines of the poem." ("Life of Byron," 1844, p. 315.) Miss Clairmont (perhaps unknown to Shelley and Mary) had already met Byron, having called on him in England to solicit his influence at Drury Lane to secure for her a theatrical engagement. Mrs. Shelley, in the notes to her husband's poems for 1816, says that "'The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty' was conceived during his [Shelley's] voyage round the Lake [of Geneva] with Lord Byron." She adds that Shelley "occupied himself during this voyage by reading the 'Nouvelle Héloïse' for the first time. The reading it on the very spot where the scenes are laid, added to the interest; and he was at once surprised and charmed by the passionate eloquence and earnest entralling interest that pervades this work. There was something in the character of Saint-Preux, in his abnegation of self, and in the worship he paid to love, that coincided with Shelley's own disposition; and, though differing in many of the views, and shocked by others, yet the effect of the whole was fascinating and delightful."

We got into the tower by a kind of window. The walls are immensely solid, and the stone of which it is built so hard, that it yet retained the mark of chisels. The boatman said that this tower was once three times higher than it is now. There are two staircases in the thickness of the walls, one of which is entirely demolished, and the other half-ruined, and only accessible by a ladder. The town itself, now an inconsiderable village inhabited by a few fishermen, was built by a Queen of Burgundy, and reduced to its present state by the inhabitants of Berne, who burnt and ravaged everything they could find.

Leaving Hermance, we arrived at sunset at the village of Nerni[er]. After looking at our lodgings, which were gloomy and dirty, we walked out by the side of the lake. It was beautiful to see the vast expanse of these purple and misty waters broken by the craggy islets near to its slant and "beached margin." There were many fish sporting in the lake, and multitudes were collected close to the rocks to catch the flies which inhabited them.

On returning to the village, we sat on a wall beside the lake, looking at some children who were playing at a game like nine-pins. The children here appeared in an extraordinary way deformed and diseased. Most of them were crooked, and with enlarged throats; but one little boy had such exquisite grace in his mien and motions, as I never before saw equalled in a child. His countenance was beautiful for the expression with which it overflowed. There was a mixture of pride and gentleness in his eyes and lips, the indications of sensibility, which his education will probably pervert to misery or seduce to crime; but there was more of gentleness than of pride, and it seemed that the pride was tamed from its original wildness by the habitual exercise of milder feelings. My companion gave him a piece of money, which he took without speaking, with a sweet smile of easy thankfulness, and then with an unembarrassed air turned to his play. All this might scarcely be; but the imagination surely could not forbear to breathe

into the most inanimate forms, some likeness of its own visions, on such a serene and glowing evening, in this remote and romantic village, beside the calm lake that bore us hither.

On returning to our inn, we found that the servant had arranged our rooms, and deprived them of the greater portion of their former disconsolate appearance. They reminded my companion of Greece ; it was five years, he said, since he had slept in such beds. The influence of the recollections excited by this circumstance on our conversation gradually faded, and I retired to rest with no unpleasant sensations, thinking of our journey to-morrow, and of the pleasure of recounting the little adventures of it when we return.

The next morning we passed Yvoire, a scattered village with an ancient castle, whose houses are interspersed with trees, and which stands at a little distance from Nerni, on the promontory which bounds a deep bay, some miles in extent. So soon as we arrived at this promontory, the lake began to assume an aspect of wilder magnificence. The mountains of Savoy, whose summits were bright with snow, descended in broken slopes to the lake : on high the rocks were dark with pine forests, which become deeper and more immense, until the ice and snow mingle with the points of naked rock that pierce the blue air ; but below, groves of walnut, chestnut, and oak, with openings of lawn fields, attested the milder climate.

As soon as we had passed the opposite promontory, we saw the river Drance, which descends from between a chasm in the mountains, and makes a plain near the lake, intersected by its divided streams. Thousands of *besolets*, beautiful water-birds, like sea-gulls, but smaller, with purple on their backs, take their station on the shallows where its waters mingle with the lake. As we approached Evian, the mountains descended more precipitously to the lake, and masses of intermingled wood and rock overhung its shining spire.



We arrived at this town about seven o'clock, after a day which involved more rapid changes of atmosphere than I ever recollect to have observed before. The morning was cold and wet; then an easterly wind, and the clouds hard and high; then thunder showers, and wind shifting to every quarter; then a war blast from the south, and summer clouds hanging over the peaks, with bright blue sky between. About half-an-hour after we had arrived at Evian, a few flashes of lightning came from a dark cloud, directly overhead, and continued after the cloud had dispersed. "*Diespiter per pura tonantes egit equos:*" a phenomenon which certainly had no influence on me, corresponding with that which it produced on Horace.

The appearance of the inhabitants of Evian is more wretched, diseased, and poor, than I ever recollect to have seen. The contrast indeed between the subjects of the King of Sardinia and the citizens of the independent republics of Switzerland, affords a powerful illustration of the blighting mischiefs of despotism, within the space of a few miles. They have mineral waters here, *eaux savonneuses* they call them. In the evening we had some difficulty about our passports, but so soon as the syndic heard my companion's rank and name, he apologised for the circumstance. The inn was good. During our voyage, on the distant height of a hill, covered with pine-forests, we saw a ruined castle, which reminded me of those on the Rhine.

We left Evian on the following morning, with a wind of such violence as to permit but one sail to be carried. The waves also were exceedingly high, and our boat so heavily laden, that there appeared to be some danger. We arrived, however, safe at Meillerie, after passing with great speed mighty forests which overhung the lake, and lawns of exquisite verdure, and mountains with bare and icy points, which rose immediately from the summit of the rocks, whose bases were echoing to the waves.

We here heard that the Empress Maria Louisa had slept

at Meillerie before the present inn was built, and when the accommodations were those of the most wretched village in remembrance of St. Preux. How beautiful it is to find that the common sentiments of human nature can attach themselves to those who are the most removed from its duties and its enjoyments, when Genius pleads for their admission at the gate of Power. To own them was becoming in the Empress, and confirms the affectionate praise contained in the regret of a great and enlightened nation. A Bourbon dared not even to have remembered Rousseau. She owed this power to that democracy which her husband's dynasty outraged, and of which it was however, in some sort, the representative among the nations of the earth. This little incident shows at once how unfit and how impossible it is for the ancient system of opinions, or for any power built upon a conspiracy to revive them, permanently to subsist among mankind. We dined there, and had some honey, the best I have ever tasted, the very essence of the mountain flowers, and as fragrant. Probably the village derives its name from this production. Meillerie is the well-known scene of St. Preux's visionary exile; but Meillerie is indeed enchanted ground, were Rousseau no magician. Groves of pine, chestnut, and walnut overshadow it; magnificent and unbounded forests to which England affords no parallel. In the midst of these woods are dells of lawny expanse, inconceivably verdant, adorned with a thousand of the rarest flowers, and odorous with thyme.

The lake appeared somewhat calmer as we left Meillerie, sailing close to the banks, whose magnificence augmented with the turn of every promontory. But we congratulated ourselves too soon; the wind gradually increased in violence, until it blew tremendously; and, as it came from the remotest extremity of the lake, produced waves of a frightful height, and covered the whole surface with a chaos of foam. One of our boatmen, who was a dreadfully stupid fellow, persisted in holding the sail at a time when the boat

was on the point of being driven under water by the hurricane. On discovering his error, he let it entirely go, and the boat for a moment refused to obey the helm; in addition, the rudder was so broken as to render the management of it very difficult; one wave fell in, and then another. My companion, an excellent swimmer, took off his coat, I did the same, and we sat with our arms crossed, every instant expecting to be swamped. The sail was however again held, the boat obeyed the helm, and still in imminent peril from the immensity of the waves, we arrived in a few minutes at a sheltered port, in the village of St. Gingoux.

I felt in this near prospect of death a mixture of sensations, among which terror entered, though but subordinately. My feelings would have been less painful had I been alone; but I knew that my companion would have attempted to save me, and I was overcome with humiliation, when I thought that his life might have been risked to preserve mine. When we arrived at St. Gingoux, the inhabitants, who stood on the shore, unaccustomed to see a vessel as frail as ours, and fearing to venture at all on such a sea, exchanged looks of wonder and congratulation with our boatmen, who, as well as ourselves, were well pleased to set foot on shore.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "I have traversed all Rousseau's ground with the 'Héloïse' before me; and am struck to a degree that I cannot express, with the force and accuracy of his descriptions and the beauty of their reality: Meillerie, Clarens, and Nevy, and the Château de Chillon are places of which I shall say little, because all I could say must fall short of the impressions they stamp. Three days ago, we were most nearly wrecked in a squall off Meillerie, and driven to shore. I ran no risk, being so near the rocks, and a good swimmer; but our party were wet and incommoded a good deal. The wind was strong enough to blow down some trees, as we found on landing; however, all is righted, and right." (Byron to John Murray, June 27, 1816.) Moore also alludes to the adventure on the Lake: "Towards the end of June, Lord Byron, accompanied by his friend Shelley, made a tour in his boat round the Lake. In the squall off Meillerie, which he [Byron] mentions, their danger was considerable. In the expectation, every moment, of being obliged to swim for his life, Lord Byron had already thrown off his coat, and, as Shelley was no

St. Gingoux is even more beautiful than Meillerie ; the mountains are higher, and their loftiest points of elevation descend more abruptly to the lake. On high, the aerial summits still cherish great depths of snow in their ravines, and in the paths of their unseen torrents. One of the highest of these is called Roche de St. Julien, beneath whose pinnacles the forests became deeper and more extensive ; the chestnut gives a peculiarity to the scene, which is most beautiful, and will make a picture in my memory, distinct from all other mountain scenes which I have ever before visited.

As we arrived here early, we took a *voiture* to visit the mouth of the Rhone. We went between the mountains and the lake, under groves of mighty chestnut trees, beside perpetual streams, which are nourished by the snows above, and form stalactites on the rocks, over which they fall. We saw an immense chestnut tree, which had been overthrown by the hurricane of the morning. The place where the Rhone joins the lake was marked by a line of tremendous breakers ; the river is as rapid as when it leaves the lake, but is muddy and dark. We went about a league farther on the road to La Valais, and stopped at a castle called La Tour de Bouverie, which seems to be the frontier of Switzerland and Savoy, as we were asked for our passports, on the supposition of our proceeding to Italy.

On one side of the road was the immense Roche de St. Julien, which overhung it ; through the gateway of the castle we saw the snowy mountains of La Valais, clothed in clouds, and, on the other side, was the willowy plane of the Rhone, in a character of striking contrast with the rest of the scene, bounded by the dark mountains that overhang Clarens, Vevai, and the lake that rolls between.

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swimmer, insisted upon endeavouring, by some means, to save him. This offer, however, Shelley positively refused ; and seating himself quietly upon a locker, and grasping the rings at each end firmly in his hands, declared his determination to go down in that position, without a struggle." (Moore's "Life of Byron," 1844, p. 320.)

In the midst of the plain rises a little isolated hill, on which the white spire of a church peeps from among the tufted chestnut woods. We returned to St. Gingoux before sunset, and I passed the evening in reading "Julie."

As my companion rises late, I had time before breakfast, on the ensuing morning, to hunt the waterfalls<sup>1</sup> of the river that fall into the lake at St. Gingoux. The stream is, indeed, from the declivity over which it falls, only a succession of waterfalls, which roar over the rocks with a perpetual sound, and suspend their unceasing spray on the leaves and flowers that overhang and adorn its savage banks. The path that conducted along this river sometimes avoided the precipices of its shores, by leading through meadows; sometimes threaded the base of the perpendicular and caverned rocks. I gathered in these meadows a nosegay of such flowers as I never saw in England, and which I thought more beautiful for that rarity.

On my return, after breakfast, we sailed for Clarens, determining first to see the three mouths of the Rhone, and then the castle of Chillon; the day was fine, and the water calm. We passed from the blue waters of the lake over the stream of the Rhone, which is rapid even at a great distance from its confluence with the lake; the turbid waters mixed with those of the lake, but mixed with them unwillingly. (See "Nouvelle Héloïse," Lettre 17, Part 4.) I read "Julie" all day; an overflowing, as it now seems, surrounded by the scenes which it has so wonderfully peopled, of sublimest genius, and more than human sensibility. Meillerie, the castle of Chillon, Clarens, the mountains of La Valais and Savoy, present themselves

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<sup>1</sup> "Take all that's mine 'beneath the moon,'  
If I with her but half a noon  
May sit beneath the walls  
Of some old cave, and mossy nook,  
When up she winds along the brook  
To hunt the waterfalls."

Wordsworth's "Louisa, after accompanying her on a mountain excursion."

to the imagination as monuments of things that were once familiar, and of beings that were once dear to it. They were created indeed by one mind, but a mind so powerfully bright as to cast a shade of falsehood on the records that are called reality.

We passed on to the castle of Chillon, and visited its dungeons and towers. These prisons are excavated below the lake; the principal dungeon is supported by seven columns, whose branching capitals support the roof. Close to the very walls, the lake is eight hundred feet deep; iron rings are fastened to these columns, and on them were engraven a multitude of names, partly those of visitors, and partly doubtless of the prisoners, of whom now no memory remains, and who thus beguiled a solitude which they have long ceased to feel. One date was as ancient as 1670. At the commencement of the Reformation, and indeed long after that period, this dungeon was the receptacle of those who shook, or who denied the system of idolatry, from the effects of which mankind is even now slowly emerging.

Close to this long and lofty dungeon was a narrow cell, and beyond it one larger and far more lofty and dark, supported upon two unornamented arches. Across one of these arches was a beam, now black and rotten, on which prisoners were hung in secret. I never saw a monument more terrible of that cold and inhuman tyranny, which it had been the delight of man to exercise over man. It was indeed one of those many tremendous fulfilments which render the "*perniciēs humani generis*" of the great Tacitus so solemn and irrefragable a prophecy. The gendarme, who conducted us over this castle, told us that there was an opening to the lake, by means of a secret spring, connected with which the whole dungeon might be filled with water before the prisoners could possibly escape!

We proceeded with a contrary wind to Clarens against a heavy swell. I never felt more strongly than on landing

at Clarens, that the spirit of old times had deserted its once cherished habitation. A thousand times, thought I, have Julia and St. Preux walked on this terraced road, looking towards these mountains which I now behold; nay, treading on the ground where I now tread. From the window of our lodging our landlady pointed out "le bosquet de Julie." At least the inhabitants of this village are impressed with an idea that the persons of that romance had actual existence. In the evening we walked thither. It is indeed Julia's wood. The hay was making under the trees; the trees themselves were aged, but vigorous and interspersed with younger ones, which are destined to be their successors, and in future years, when we are dead, to afford a shade to future worshippers of nature, who love the memory of that tenderness and peace of which this was the imaginary abode. We walked forward among the vineyards, whose narrow terraces overlook this affecting scene. Why did the cold maxims of the world compel me at this moment to repress the tears of melancholy transport which it would have been so sweet to indulge, immeasurably, even until the darkness of night had swallowed up the objects which excited them.

I forgot to remark, what indeed my companion remarked to me, that our danger from the storm took place precisely in the spot where Julie and her lover were nearly overset, and where St. Preux was tempted to plunge with her into the lake.

On the following day we went to see the castle of Clarens, a square strong house, with very few windows, surrounded by a double terrace that overlooks the valley, or rather the plain of Clarens. The road which conducted to it wound up the steep ascent through woods of walnut and chestnut. We gathered roses on the terrace, in the feeling that they might be the posterity of some planted by Julie's hand. We sent their dead and withered leaves to the absent.

We went again to "the bosquet de Julie," and found that

the precise spot was now utterly obliterated, and a heap of stones marked the place where the little chapel had once stood. Whilst we were execrating the author of this brutal folly, our guide informed us that the land belonged to the convent of St. Bernard, and that this outrage had been committed by their orders. I knew before, that if avarice could harden the hearts of men, a system of prescriptive religion has an influence far more inimical to natural sensibility. I know that an isolated man is sometimes restrained by shame from outraging the venerable feelings arising out of the memory of genius, which once made nature even lovelier than itself; but associated man holds it as the very sacrament of his union to forswear all delicacy, all benevolence, all remorse; all that is true, or tender, or sublime.

We sailed from Clarens to Vevai. Vevai is a town more beautiful in its simplicity than any I have ever seen. Its market-place, a spacious square interspersed with trees, looks directly upon the mountains of Savoy and La Valais, the lake, and the valley of the Rhone. It was at Vevai that Rousseau conceived the design of "Julie."

From Vevai we came to Ouchy, a village near Lausanne. The coasts of the Pays de Vaud, though full of villages and vineyards, present an aspect of tranquillity and peculiar beauty which well compensates for the solitude which I am accustomed to admire. The hills are very high and rocky, crowned and interspersed with woods. Waterfalls echo from the cliffs, and shine afar. In one place we saw the traces of two rocks of immense size, which had fallen from the mountain behind. One of these lodged in a room where a young woman was sleeping, without injuring her. The vineyards were utterly destroyed in its path, and the earth torn up.

The rain detained us two days at Ouchy. We, however, visited Lausanne, and saw Gibbon's house. We were shown the decayed summer-house where he finished his History, and the old acacias on the terrace, from which he saw



Mont Blanc, after having written the last sentence. There is something grand and even touching in the regret which he expresses at the completion of his task. It was conceived amid the ruins of the Capitol. The sudden departure of his cherished and accustomed toil must have left him, like the death of a dear friend, sad and solitary.

My companion gathered some acacia leaves to preserve in remembrance of him. I refrained from doing so, fearing to outrage the greater and more sacred name of Rousseau ; the contemplation of whose imperishable creations had left no vacancy in my heart for mortal things. Gibbon had a cold and unimpassioned spirit. I never felt more inclination to rail at the prejudices which cling to such a thing, than now that "Julie" and Clarens, Lausanne and the "Roman Empire," compelled me to contrast between Rousseau and Gibbon.<sup>1</sup>

When we returned, in the only interval of sunshine

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<sup>1</sup> Byron mentions the acacia leaves in his letter to John Murray : "Ouchy, near Lausanne, June 27, 1816. I am thus far (kept back by stress of weather) on my way back to Diodati (near Geneva) from a voyage in my boat round the Lake ; and I enclose you a sprig of *Gibbon's acacia* and some rose-leaves from his garden, which with part of his house I have just seen. You will find honourable mention in his 'Life' made of this 'acacia,' when he walked out on the night of concluding his history. The garden and *summer-house*, where he composed, are neglected, and the last utterly decayed ; but they still show it as his 'cabinet,' and seem perfectly aware of his memory." The following is the memorable passage in Gibbon's "Life" to which Byron and Shelley allude : "It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on the recovery of my freedom, and perhaps the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future date of my History, the life of the historian must be short and precarious."

during the day, I walked on the pier which the lake was lashing with its waves. A rainbow spanned the lake, or rather rested one extremity of its arch upon the water, and the other at the foot of the mountains of Savoy. Some white houses, I know not if they were those of Meillerie, shone through the yellow fire.

On Saturday, the 30th of June, we quitted Ouchy, and after two days of pleasant sailing arrived on Sunday evening at Montalegre.

238. TO WILLIAM GODWIN  
(London)

GENEVA,

July 17, 1816.

SIR,

I write by this post to Mr. Hume, giving the authority which you request. Before this letter arrives you will, however, have received another from me affording a solution of the questions contained in your last, and rendering that request superfluous. The delay which has occurred in writing to Mr. Hume and to you arose simply from my expecting by every post an acknowledgment of the letters to which you allude. I need not again assert that I think Mr. Turner neither a good man nor a good judge of men. He acted in your affairs with duplicity, and accused me indirectly of the duplicity which he was conscious attached to his own conduct.

Mr. Turner was, in the instance which you state, and will be in every instance, deceived in his judgment of me, for no other reason than because he suspects me to be like himself.

I recommend to you caution in ascertaining the value of the estates before you allow the deeds to be drawn, as of course, although the business is nominally confided to Mr. Hume, you are really the agent.

I suppose it will be necessary to despatch the deeds

hither for signature ; a power of attorney, I fear, would not suffice. However that may be, let us choose first the easiest and the quietest, next, the securest plan. I shall not remain longer at Geneva than affairs require, and hope to have the earliest and minutest intelligence from you on a question so important to us both.

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed outside],  
W. GODWIN, Esq.,  
41 Skinner Street,  
Snow Hill, London,  
Angleterre.

239. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

GENEVA,  
July 17, 1816.

My opinion of turning to one spot of earth and calling it our home, and of the excellences and usefulness of the sentiments arising out of this attachment, has at length produced in me the resolution of acquiring this possession.

You are the only man who has sufficient regard for me to take an interest in the fulfilment of this design, and whose tastes conform sufficiently to mine to engage me to confide the execution of it to your discretion.

I do not trouble you with apologies for giving you this commission ; some slight negotiations about the letting of a house—the superintendence of a disorderly garden, some palings to be mended, some books to be removed and set up. I require only rural exertion, walks, and circuitous wanderings.

I wish you would get all my books and all my furniture from Bishopgate, and all other effects appertaining to me. I have written to . . . to secure all that belongs to me there to you. I have written also to L[ongdill] to give up possession of the house on the 3rd of August.

When you have possessed yourself of all my affairs, I wish you to look out for a home for me and Mary and

William, and the kitten, who is now *en pension*. I wish you to get an unfurnished house, with as good a garden as may be, near Windsor Forest, and take a lease of it for fourteen or twenty-one years. The house must not be too small. I wish the situation to resemble as nearly as possible that of Bishopgate, and should think that Sunning Hill, or Winkfield Plain, or the neighbourhood of Virginia Waters, would afford some possibilities.

Houses are now exceedingly cheap and plentiful; but I entrust the whole of this affair entirely to your own discretion.

I shall hear from you, of course, as to what you have done on this subject, and shall not delay to remit you whatever expenses you may find it necessary to incur. Perhaps, however, you had better sell the useless part of the Bishopgate furniture—I mean those odious curtains, etc.

Will you write to L[ongdill] to tell him that you are authorized on my part to go over the inventory with Lady L——'s people on the third of August, if they please, and to make whatever arrangements may be requisite. I should be content with the Bishopgate house, dear as it is, if Lady L—— would make the sale of it a post-obit transaction. I merely suggest this, that if you see any possibility of proposing such an arrangement with effect, you might do it.

My present intention is to return to England, and to make that most excellent of nations my perpetual resting place. I think it is extremely probable that we shall return next spring—perhaps before, perhaps after, but certainly we shall return.

On the motives and on the consequences of this journey, I reserve much explanation for some future winter walk or summer expedition. This much alone is certain, that before we return we shall have seen, and felt, and heard, a multiplicity of things which will haunt our talk and make us a little better worth knowing than we were before our departure.

If possible, we think of descending the Danube in a boat, of visiting Constantinople and Athens, then Rome and the Tuscan cities, and returning by the south of France, always following great rivers. The Danube, the Po, the Rhone, and the Garonne; rivers are not like roads, the work of the hands of man; they imitate mind, which wanders at will over pathless deserts, and flows through nature's loveliest recesses, which are inaccessible to anything besides. They have the viler advantage also of affording a cheaper mode of conveyance.

This eastern scheme is one which has just seized on our imaginations. I fear that the detail of execution will destroy it, as all other wild and beautiful visions; but at all events you will hear from us wherever we are, and to whatever adventures destiny enforces us.

Tell me in return all English news. What has become of my poem?<sup>1</sup> I hope it has already sheltered itself in the bosom of its mother, Oblivion, from whose embraces no one could have been so barbarous as to tear it except me.

Tell me of the political state of England—its literature, of which when I speak Coleridge is in my thoughts;—yourself, lastly your own employments, your historical labours.

I had written thus far when your letter to Mary dated the 8th arrived. What you say of Bishopgate of course modifies that part of this letter which relates to it. I confess I did not learn the destined ruin without some pain, but it is well for me perhaps that a situation requiring so large an expense should be placed beyond our hopes.

You must shelter my roofless Penates, dedicate some new temple to them, and perform the functions of a priest in my absence. They are innocent deities, and their worship neither sanguinary nor absurd.

Leave Mammon and Jehovah to those who delight in

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<sup>1</sup> "Alastor or the Spirit of Solitude and other Poems." 1816.

wickedness and slavery—their altars are stained with blood or polluted with gold, the price of blood. But the shrines of the Penates are good wood fires, or window frames intertwined with creeping plants; their hymns are the purring of kittens, the hissing of kettles; the long talks over the past and dead, the laugh of children, the warm wind of summer filling the quiet house, and the pelting storm of winter struggling in vain for entrance. In talking of the Penates, will you not liken me to Julius Cæsar dedicating a temple to Liberty?

As I have said in the former part of my letter, I trust entirely to your discretion on the subject of a house. Certainly the Forest engages my preference, because of the sylvan nature of the place, and the beasts with which it is filled. But I am not insensible to the beauties of the Thames, and any extraordinary eligibility of situation you mention in your letter would overwhelm our habitual affection for the neighbourhood of Bishopgate.

Its proximity to the spot you have chosen<sup>1</sup> is an argument with us in favour of the Thames. Recollect, however, we are now choosing a fixed, settled, eternal home, and as such its internal qualities will affect us more constantly than those which consist in the surrounding scenery, which whatever it may be at first, will shortly be no more than the colours with which our own habits shall invest it.

I am glad that circumstances do not permit the choice to be my own. I shall abide by yours as others abide by the necessity of their birth.

. . . . .

P. E. S.

210. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

HOTEL DE LONDRES, CHAMOUNI,  
July 22, 1816.

Whilst you, my friend, are engaged in securing a home for us, we are wandering in search of recollections to

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<sup>1</sup> Peacock was living at Great Marlow, in Buckinghamshire.

embellish it. I do not err in conceiving that you are interested in details of all that is majestic or beautiful in nature ; but how shall I describe to you the scenes by which I am now surrounded ? To exhaust the epithets which express the astonishment and the admiration—the very excess of satisfied astonishment, where expectation scarcely acknowledged any boundary, is this to impress upon your mind the images which fill mine now, even till it overflow ? I too have read the raptures of travellers ; I will be warned by their example ; I will simply detail to you all that I can relate, or all that, if related, would enable you to conceive, what we have done or seen since the morning of the 20th when we left Geneva.<sup>1</sup>

We commenced our intended journey to Chamouni at half-past eight in the morning. We passed through the champagn country, which extends from Mont Salève to the base of the higher Alps. The country is sufficiently fertile, covered with cornfields and orchards, and intersected by sudden acclivities with flat summits. The day was cloudless and excessively hot, the Alps were perpetually in sight, and as we advanced, the mountains, which form their outskirts, closed in around us. We passed a bridge over a stream, which discharges itself into the Arve. The Arve itself, much swollen by the rains, flows constantly to the right of the road.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This opening paragraph was not included by Shelley in the "History of a Six Weeks' Tour." It was first printed by Charles S. Middleton in his life of Shelley from a copy of the letter made by Mrs. Shelley which was accidentally left among other papers at Marlow, where they fell into Middleton's hands. Peacock alludes to the subject in his "Memoirs of Shelley," *Fraser's Magazine*, Jan., 1860.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley's poem, "'Mont Blanc,'" was inspired by a view of that mountain, and its surrounding peaks and valleys, as he lingered on the Bridge of Arve on his way through the Valley of Chamouni. Shelley makes the following mention of this poem in his publication of the 'History of a Six Weeks' Tour,' and Letters from Switzerland. 'The poem entitled "Mont Blanc" is written by the author of the two letters from Chamouni and Vevai. It was composed under the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited by

As we approached Bonneville through an avenue composed of a beautiful species of drooping poplar, we observed that the cornfields on each side were covered with inundation. Bonneville is a neat little town, with no conspicuous peculiarity, except the white towers of the prison, an extensive building overlooking the town. At Bonneville the Alps commence, one of which, clothed by forests, rises almost immediately from the opposite bank of the Arve.

From Bonneville to Cluses the road conducts through a spacious and fertile plain, surrounded on all sides by mountains, covered like those of Meillerie with forests of intermingled pine and chestnut. At Cluses the road turns suddenly to the right, following the Arve along the chasm, which it seems to have hollowed for itself among the perpendicular mountains. The scene assumes here a more savage and colossal character: the valley becomes narrow, affording no more space than is sufficient for the river and the road. The pines descend to the banks, imitating, with their irregular spires, the pyramidal crags, which lift themselves far above the regions of forest into the deep azure of the sky, and among the white dazzling clouds. The scene, at the distance of half-a-mile from Cluses, differs from that of Matlock in little else than in the immensity of its proportions, and in its untameable inaccessible solitude, inhabited only by the goats which we saw browsing on the rocks.

Near Maglans, within a league of each other, we saw two waterfalls. They were no more than mountain rivulets, but the height from which they fell, at least of *twelve* hundred feet, made them assume a character inconsistent with the smallness of their stream. The first fell from the overhanging brow of a black precipice on an

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the objects which it attempts to describe; and as an undisciplined overflowing of the soul, resists its claim to approbation on an attempt to imitate the untamable wildness and inaccessible solemnity from which these feelings sprang." (Mrs. Shelley's notes to the Poems, for 1816.)



enormous rock, precisely resembling some colossal Egyptian statue of a female deity. It struck the head of the visionary image, and gracefully dividing there, fell from it in folds of foam more like a cloud than water, imitating a veil of the most exquisite woof. It then united, concealing the lower part of the statue, and hiding itself in a winding of its channel, burst into a deeper fall, and crossed our route in its path towards the Arve.

The other waterfall was more continuous and larger. The violence with which it fell made it look more like some shape which an exhalation had assumed, than like water, for it streamed beyond the mountain, which appeared dark behind it, as it might have appeared behind an evanescent cloud.

The character of the scenery continued the same until we arrived at St. Martin (called in the maps Sallanches), the mountains perpetually becoming more elevated, exhibiting at every turn of the road more craggy summits, loftier and wider extent of forests, darker and more deep recesses.

The following morning we proceeded from St. Martin, on mules, to Chamouni, accompanied by two guides. We proceeded, as we had done the preceding day, along the valley of the Arve, a valley surrounded on all sides by immense mountains, whose rugged precipices are intermixed on high with dazzling snow. Their bases were still covered with the eternal forests, which perpetually grew darker and more profound as we approached the inner regions of the mountains.

On arriving at a small village at the distance of a league from St. Martin, we dismounted from our mules, and were conducted by our guides to view a cascade. We beheld an immense body of water fall two hundred and fifty feet, dashing from rock to rock, and casting a spray which formed a mist around it, in the midst of which hung a multitude of sunbows, which faded or became unspeakably vivid, as the inconstant sun shone through the clouds. When

we approached near to it, the rain of the spray reached us, and our clothes were wetted by the quick-falling but minute particles of water. The cataract fell from above into a deep craggy chasm at our feet, where, changing its character to that of a mountain stream, it pursued its course towards the Arve, roaring over the rocks that impeded its progress.

As we proceeded, our route still lay through the valley, or rather, as it had now become, the vast ravine, which is at once the couch and the creation of the terrible Arve. We ascended, winding between two mountains, whose immensity staggers the imagination. We crossed the path of a torrent, which three days since had descended from the thawing snow, and torn the road away.

We dined at Servoz, a little village, where there are lead and copper mines, and where we saw a cabinet of natural curiosities, like those of Keswick and Bethgelert. We saw in this cabinet some chamois' horns, and the horns of an exceedingly rare animal called the bouquetin, which inhabits the deserts of snow to the south of Mont Blanc: it is an animal of the stag kind; its horns weigh, at least twenty-seven English pounds. It is inconceivable how so small an animal could support so inordinate a weight. The horns are of a very peculiar conformation, being broad, massy, and pointed at its ends, and surrounded with a number of rings, which are supposed to afford an indication of its age: there were seventeen rings on the largest of these horns.

From Servoz three leagues remain to Chamouni—Mont Blanc was before us—the Alps, with their innumerable glaciers on high all around, closing in the complicated windings of the single vale—forests inexpressibly beautiful, but majestic in their beauty—intermingled beech and pine, and oak, overshadowed our road, or receded, whilst lawns of such verdure as I have never seen before, occupied these openings, and gradually became darker in their recesses. Mont Blanc was before us, but it was covered with cloud;

its base, furrowed with dreadful gaps, was seen above. Pinnacles of snow intolerably bright, part of the chain connected with Mont Blanc, shone through the clouds at intervals on high. I never knew—I never imagined—what mountains were before. The immensity of these aerial summits excited, when they suddenly burst upon the sight, a sentiment of ecstatic wonder, not unallied to madness. And remember this was all one scene, it all pressed home to our regard and our imagination. Though it embraced a vast extent of space, the snowy pyramids which shot into the bright blue sky seemed to overhang our path; the ravine, clothed with gigantic pines, and black with its depth below, so deep that the very roaring of the untameable Arve, which rolled through it, could not be heard above—all was as much our own, as if we had been the creators of such impressions in the minds of others as now occupied our own. Nature was the poet, whose harmony held our spirits more breathless than that of the divinest.

As we entered the valley of Chamouni (which in fact, may be considered as a continuation of those which we have followed from Bonneville and Cluses,) clouds hung upon the mountains at the distance perhaps of 6,000 feet from the earth, but so as effectually to conceal, not only Mont Blanc, but the other *aiguilles*, as they call them here, attached and subordinate to it. We were travelling along the valley, when suddenly we heard a sound as the burst of smothered thunder rolling above; yet there was something in the sound that told us it could not be thunder. Our guide hastily pointed out to us a part of the mountain opposite, from whence the sound came. It was an avalanche. We saw the smoke of its path among the rocks, and continued to hear at intervals the bursting of its fall. It fell on the bed of a torrent, which it displaced, and presently we saw its tawny-coloured waters also spread themselves over the ravine, which was their couch.

We did not, as we intended, visit the *Glacier des Bossons*

to-day, although it descends within a few minutes' walk of the road, wishing to survey it at least when unfatigued. We saw this glacier, which comes close to the fertile plain, as we passed. Its surface was broken into a thousand unaccountable figures; conical and pyramidical crystallizations, more than fifty feet in height, rise from its surface, and precipices of ice, of dazzling splendour, overhang the woods and meadows of the vale. This glacier winds upwards from the valley, until it joins the masses of frost from which it was produced above, winding through its own ravine like a bright belt flung over the black region of pines. There is more in all these scenes than mere magnitude of proportion: there is a majesty of outline; there is an awful grace in the very colours which invest these wonderful shapes—a charm which is peculiar to them, quite distinct even from the reality of their unutterable greatness.

July 24.

Yesterday morning we went to the source of the Arvei-ron. It is about a league from this village; the river rolls forth impetuously from an arch of ice, and spreads itself in many streams over a vast space of the valley, ravaged and laid bare by its inundations. The glacier by which its waters are nourished, overhangs this cavern and the plain, and the forests of pine which surround it, with terrible precipices of solid ice. On the other side rises the immense glacier of Montanvert, fifty miles in extent, occupying a chasm among mountains of inconceivable height, and of forms so pointed and abrupt, that they seem to pierce the sky. From this glacier we saw, as we sat on a rock, close to one of the streams of the Arvei-ron, masses of ice detach themselves from on high, and rush with a loud dull noise into the vale. The violence of their fall turned them into powder, which flowed over the rocks in imitation of waterfalls, whose ravines they usurped and filled.

In the evening, I went with Ducrée, my guide, the only

tolerable person I have seen in this country, to visit the glacier of Bossons. This glacier, like that of Montanvert, comes close to the vale, overhanging the green meadows and the dark woods with the dazzling whiteness of its precipices and pinnacles, which are like spires of radiant crystal, covered with a network of frosted silver. These glaciers flow perpetually into the valley, ravaging in their slow but irresistible progress the pastures and the forests which surround them, performing a work of desolation in ages, which a river of lava might accomplish in an hour, but far more irretrievably; for where the ice has once descended, the hardest plant refuses to grow; if even, as in some extraordinary instances, it should recede after its progress has once commenced. The glaciers perpetually move onward, at the rate of a foot each day, with a motion that commences at the spot where, on the boundaries of perpetual congelation, they are produced by the freezing of the waters which arise from the partial melting of the eternal snows. They drag with them, from the regions whence they derive their origin, all the ruins of the mountains, enormous rocks, and immense accumulations of sand and stone. These are driven onwards by the irresistible stream of solid ice; and when they arrive at a declivity of the mountain, sufficiently rapid, roll down, scattering ruin. I saw one of these rocks which had descended in the spring (winter here is the season of silence and safety), which measured forty feet in every direction.

The verge of a glacier, like that of Bossons, presents the most vivid image of desolation that it is possible to conceive. No one dares to approach it; for the enormous pinnacles of ice which perpetually fall, are perpetually reproduced. The pines of the forest, which bound it at one extremity, are overthrown and shattered, to a wide extent, at its base. There is something inexpressibly dreadful in the aspect of the few branchless trunks, which, nearest to the ice rifts, still stand in the uprooted soil.

The meadows perish, overwhelmed with sand and stones. Within this last year, these glaciers have advanced three hundred feet into the valley. Saussure, the naturalist, says, that they have their periods of increase and decay : the people of the country hold an opinion entirely different ; but as I judge, more probable. It is agreed by all, that the snow on the summit of Mont Blanc and the neighbouring mountains perpetually augments, and that ice, in the form of glaciers, subsists without melting in the valley of Chamouni during its transient and variable summer. If the snow which produces this glacier must augment, and the heat of the valley is no obstacle to the perpetual existence of such masses of ice as have already descended into it, the consequence is obvious ; the glaciers must augment and will subsist, at least until they have overflowed this vale.

I will not pursue Buffon's sublime but gloomy theory—that this globe which we inhabit will, at some future period, be changed into a mass of frost by the encroachments of the polar ice, and of that produced on the most elevated points of the earth. Do you, who assert the supremacy of Ahriman, imagine him throned among these desolating snows, among these palaces of death and frost, so sculptured in this their terrible magnificence by the adamantine hand of necessity, and that he casts around him, as the first essays of his final usurpation, avalanches, torrents, rocks, and thunders, and above all these deadly glaciers, at once the proof and symbols of his reign ;—add to this, the degradation of the human species—who, in these regions, are half deformed or idiotic, and most of whom are deprived of anything that can excite interest or admiration. This is part of the subject more mournful and less sublime ; but such as neither the poet nor the philosopher should disdain to regard.

This morning we departed, on the promise of a fine day, to visit the glacier of Montanvert. In that part where it fills a slanting valley, it is called the Sea of Ice. This

valley is 950 toises, or 7,600 feet, above the level of the sea. We had not proceeded far before the rain began to fall, but we persisted until we had accomplished more than half of our journey, when we returned, wet through.

CHAMOUNT,  
July 25.

We have returned from visiting the glacier of Montanvert, or as it is called the Sea of Ice, a scene in truth of dizzying wonder. The path that winds to it along the side of a mountain, now clothed with pines, now intersected with snowy hollows, is wide and steep. The cabin of Montanvert is three leagues from Chamouni, half of which distance is performed on mules, not so sure-footed but that on the first day the one which I rode fell in what the guides call a *mauvais pas*, so that I narrowly escaped being precipitated down the mountain. We passed over a hollow covered with snow, down which vast stones are accustomed to roll. One had fallen the preceding day, a little time after we had returned: our guides desired us to pass quickly, for it is said that sometimes the least sound will accelerate their descent. We arrived at Montanvert, however, safe.<sup>1</sup>

On all sides precipitous mountains, the abodes of unrelenting frost, surround this vale: their sides are banked

<sup>1</sup> "In the visitors' album at the Chartreuse at Montanvert Shelley observed that his last predecessor had written some platitudes about 'Nature and Nature's God.' The author of 'Queen Mab' took up the pen, and signed his name with this definition *εἰμι φιλόανθρωπος δημωράτικὸς τ' ἄθεός τε*. The spelling, at which Mr. Swinburne expresses the horror of a Hellenist, is copied *literatim*. Some one added *μωρός*; and that was possibly the most sensible performance of the three." (Mr. W. M. Rossetti's "Memoir of Shelley," p. 64.) "Mr. Swinburne is said to have copied the inscription from a leaf of the Travellers' book bound up in a copy of 'The Revolt of Islam' in the possession of the late Lord Houghton. Byron on discovering the entry in the visitors' book is reported to have defaced the words, in the presence of Lord Broughton. ("Italy; Remarks made on Several Visits," Vol. I, pp. 1, 2.)

up with ice and snow, broken, heaped high, and exhibiting terrific chasms. The summits are sharp and naked pinacles, whose overhanging steepness will not even permit snow to rest upon them. Lines of dazzling ice occupy here and there their perpendicular rifts, and shine through the driving vapours with inexpressible brilliance; they pierce the clouds like things not belonging to this earth. The vale itself is filled with a mass of undulating ice, and has an ascent sufficiently gradual even to the remotest abysses of these horrible deserts. It is only half a league (about two miles) in breadth, and seems much less. It exhibits an appearance as if frost had suddenly bound up the waves and whirlpools of a mighty torrent. We walked some distance upon its surface. The waves are elevated about twelve or fifteen feet from the surface of the mass, which is intersected by long gaps of unfathomable depth, the ice of whose sides is more beautifully azure than the sky. In these regions everything changes, and is in motion. This vast mass of ice has one general progress, which ceases neither day nor night; it breaks and bursts for ever: some undulations sink while others rise; it is never the same. The echo of rocks, or of the ice and snow which fall from their overhanging precipices, or roll from their aerial summits, scarcely ceases for one moment. One would think that Mont Blanc, like the god of the Stoics, was a vast animal, and that the frozen blood for ever circulated through his stony veins.

We dined (M[ary], C[larie], and I) on the grass, in the open air, surrounded by this scene. The air is piercing and clear. We returned down the mountain sometimes encompassed by the driving vapours, sometimes cheered by the sunbeams, and arrived at our inn by seven o'clock.

MONTALEGRE,

July 28.

The next morning we returned through the rain to St. Martin. The scenery had lost something of its immensity,



thick clouds hanging over the highest mountains ; but visitings of sunlight intervened between the showers, and the blue sky shone between the accumulated clouds of snowy whiteness which brought them ; the dazzling mountains sometimes glittered through a chasm of the clouds above our heads, and all the charm of its grandeur remained. We repassed *Pont Pellisier*, a wooden bridge over the Arve, and the ravine of the Arve. We repassed the pine forests which overhang the defile, the château of St. Michael ; a haunted ruin, built on the edge of a precipice, and shadowed over by the eternal forest. We repassed the vale of Servoz, a vale more beautiful, because more luxuriant, than that of Chamouni. Mont Blanc forms one of the sides of this vale also, and the other is inclosed by an irregular amphitheatre of enormous mountains, one of which is in ruins, and fell fifty years ago into the higher part of the valley ; the smoke of its fall was seen in Piedmont, and people went from Turin to investigate whether a volcano had not burst from among the Alps. It continued falling many days, spreading, with the shock and thunder of its ruin, consternation into the neighbouring vales. In the evening we arrived at St. Martin. The next day we wound through the valley, which I have described before, and arrived in the evening at our home.

We have bought some specimens of minerals and plants, and two or three crystal seals, at Mont Blanc, to preserve the remembrance of having approached it. There is a cabinet of *histoire naturelle* at Chamouni, just as at Keswick, Matlock, and Clifton ; the proprietor of which is the very vilest specimen of that vile species of quack, that, together with the whole army of aubergistes and guides, and indeed the entire mass of the population, subsist on the weakness and credulity of travellers as leeches subsist on the sick. The most interesting of my purchases is a large collection of all the seeds of rare alpine plants, with their names written upon the outside of the papers that contain them. These I mean to colomise in my garden in England, and to

permit you to make what choice you please from them. They are companions which the Celandine—the classic Celandine—need not despise; they are as wild and more daring than he, and will tell him tales of things even as touching and sublime as the gaze of a vernal poet.

Did I tell you that there are troops of wolves among these mountains? In the winter they descend into the valleys, which the snow occupies six months of the year, and devour everything that they can find out of doors. A wolf is more powerful than the fiercest and strongest dog. There are no bears in these regions. We heard, when we were in Lucerne, that they were occasionally found in the forests which surround that lake.

Adieu.

S.

# JOURNAL

GENEVA,

SUNDAY, 18 August, 1816.

See Apollo's Sexton,<sup>1</sup> who tells us many mysteries of his trade. We talk of Ghosts. Neither Lord Byron nor M[atthew] G[regory] L[ewis] seem to believe in them; and they both agree, in the very face of reason, that none could believe in ghosts without believing in God. I do not think that all the persons who profess to discredit these visitations, really discredit them; or, if they do in the daylight, are not admonished, by the approach of loneliness and midnight, to think more respectfully of the world of shadows.

Lewis recited a poem, which he had composed at the request of the Princess of Wales. The Princess of Wales,

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775-1818), called "Apollo's Sexton" in "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers," but better known now as "Monk Lewis" on account of his notorious novel, "Ambrosio or the Monk," 1795, beloved by Shelley as a boy. Lewis, educated at Westminster, Christ Church, Oxford, and Weimar, was a pleasant, sociable man, and a friend of the Prince Regent, Byron and Scott, and author of "The Castle Spectre," 1798, "The Bravo of Venice," 1804, and other gruesome plays and novels. In 1795 he became a member of Parliament, and in 1812 inherited two large estates in Jamaica. He died on a voyage from the West Indies, where he had been endeavouring to ameliorate the condition of his slaves.

he premised, was not only a believer in ghosts, but in magic and witchcraft, and asserted, that prophecies made in her youth had been accomplished since. The tale was of a lady in Germany.

This lady, Minna, had been exceedingly attached to her husband, and they had made a vow that the one who died first should return after death to visit the other as a ghost. She was sitting one day alone in her chamber, when she heard an unusual sound of footsteps on the stairs. The door opened, and her husband's spectre, gashed with a deep wound across the forehead, and in military habiliments, entered. She appeared startled at the apparition; and the ghost told her, that when he should visit her in future, she would hear a passing bell toll, and these words distinctly uttered close to her ear, "Minna, I am here." On inquiry, it was found that her husband had fallen in battle on the very day she was visited by the vision. The intercourse between the ghost and the woman continued for some time, until the latter laid aside all terror, and indulged herself in the affection which she had felt for him while living. One evening she went to a ball, and permitted her thoughts to be alienated by the attentions of a Florentine gentleman, more witty, more graceful, and more gentle, as it appeared to her, than any person she had ever seen. As he was conducting her through the dance, a death-bell tolled. Minna, lost in the fascination of the Florentine's attentions, disregarded, or did not hear the sound. A second peal, louder and more deep, startled the whole company, when Minna heard the ghost's accustomed whisper, and raising her eyes, saw in an opposite mirror the reflection of the ghost, standing over her. She is said to have died of terror.

Lewis told four other stories—all grim.<sup>1</sup>

Thursday, 29th August.—We depart from Geneva, at

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<sup>1</sup> In the preface to Mrs. Shelley's "*Frankenstein*" (1818) (which Shelley wrote for her), she says "I passed the summer of 1816 in the

nine in the morning. The Swiss are very slow drivers ; besides which we have Jura to mount ; we, therefore, go on a very few posts to-day. The scenery is very beautiful, and we see many magnificent views. We pass Les Rousses, which, when we crossed in the spring, was deep in snow. We sleep at Morrez.

Friday, 30th.—We leave Morrez, and arrive in the evening at Dôle, after a various day.

Saturday, 31st.—From Dôle we go to Rouvray, where we sleep. We pass through Dijon ; and, after Dijon, take a different route than that which we followed on the two other occasions. The scenery has some beauty and singularity in the line of the mountains which surround the Val de Suzon. Low, yet precipitous hills, covered with vines or woods, and with streams, meadows, and poplars, at the bottom.

Sunday, September 1st.—Leave Rouvray, pass Auxerre, where we dine ; a pretty town, and arrive at two o'clock, at Villeneuve le Guiard.

Monday, 2nd.—From Villeneuve le Guiard, we arrive at Fontainebleau. The scenery around this palace is wild and even savage. The soil is full of rocks, apparently granite, which on every side break through the ground. The hills are low, but precipitous and rough. The valleys,

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environs of Geneva. The season was cold and rainy, and in the evenings we [presumably Shelley, Mary, Clare Clairmont, Byron, 'Monk' Lewis, and Polidori—Byron's travelling physician] crowded around a blazing wood fire, and occasionally amused ourselves with some German stories of ghosts, which happened to fall into our hands. These tales excited in us a playful desire for imitation. Two other friends (a tale from the pen of one of whom would be far more acceptable to the public than anything I can ever hope to produce) and myself agreed to write each a story, founded on some supernatural occurrence. The weather, however, suddenly became serene ; and my two friends left me on a journey among the Alps, and lost, in the magnificent scenes which they present, all memory of their ghostly visions. The following tale [ 'Frankenstein' ] is the only one which has been completed." Other stories, however, were written—Byron's "fragment printed with 'Mazeppa,'" and "The Vampire," by Dr. Polidori, based on Byron's sketch.

equally wild, are shaded by forests. In the midst of this wilderness stands the palace. Some of the apartments equal in magnificence anything that I could conceive. The roofs are fretted with gold, and the canopies of velvet. From Fontainebleau we proceed to Versailles, in the route towards Rouen. We arrive at Versailles at nine.

Tuesday, 3rd.—We saw the palace and gardens of Versailles and le Grand et Petit Trianon. They surpass Fontainebleau. The gardens are full of statues, vases, fountains, and colonnades. In all that essentially belongs to a garden they are extraordinarily deficient. The orangery is a stupid piece of expense. There was one orange-tree, not apparently so old, sown in 1442. We saw only the gardens and the theatre at the Petit Trianon. The gardens are in the English taste, and extremely pretty. The Grand Trianon was open. It is a summer palace, light, yet magnificent. We were unable to devote the time it deserved to the gallery of paintings here. There was a portrait of Madame de la Vallière, the repentant mistress of Louis XIV. She was melancholy, but exceedingly beautiful, and was represented as holding a skull, and sitting before a crucifix, pale, and with downcast eyes.

We then went to the great palace. The apartments are unfurnished; but even with this disadvantage, are more magnificent than those of Fontainebleau. They are lined with marble of various colours, whose pedestals and capitals are gilt, and the ceiling is richly gilt with compartments of painting. The arrangement of these materials has in them, it is true, something effeminate and royal. Could a Grecian architect have commanded all the labour and money which was expended on Versailles, he would have produced a fabric which the whole world has never equalled. We saw the Hall of Hercules, the balcony where the King and the Queen exhibited themselves to the Parisian mob. The people who showed us through the palace, obstinately refused to say anything about the Revolution. We could not even find out in which chamber

the rioters of the 10th August found the king. We saw the Salle d'Opéra, where are now preserved the portraits of the kings. There was the race of the House of Orleans, with the exception of Egalité, all extremely handsome. There was Madame de Maintenon, and beside her a beautiful little girl, the daughter of La Vallière. The pictures had been hidden during the Revolution. We saw the library of Louis XVI. The librarian had held some place in the ancient court near Marie-Antoinette. He returned with the Bourbons, and was waiting for some better situation. He showed us a book which he had preserved during the Revolution. It was a book of paintings, representing a tournament at the Court of Louis XIV; and it seemed that the present desolation of France, the fury of the injured people, and all the horrors to which they abandoned themselves, stung by their long sufferings, flowed naturally enough from expenditures so immense, as must have been demanded by the magnificence of this tournament. The vacant rooms of this palace imaged well the hollow show of monarchy. After seeing these things we departed towards Hâvre, and slept at Auxerre.

Wednesday, 4th.—We passed through Rouen, and saw the cathedral, an immense specimen of the most costly and magnificent gothic. The interior of the church disappoints. We saw the burial-place of Richard Cœur de Lion and his brother. The altar of the church is a fine piece of marble. Sleep at Yvetot.

Thursday, 5th.—We arrived at Hâvre, and wait for the packet—wind contrary.<sup>1</sup> S.

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<sup>1</sup> The Shelleys left Havre on Sept. 7 and arrived at Portsmouth on Sept. 8, after a passage of twenty-four hours. Shelley went to London, while Mary, Clare, William, and the Swiss nurse Elisc, remained at Bath. Shelley and Mary afterwards visited Peacock at Great Marlow, Sept. 20-24—"a period," says Peacock, "of unbroken sunshine. The neighbourhood of Marlow abounds with beautiful walks; the river scenery is also fine. We took every day a long excursion either on foot or on the water. He took a house there, partly, perhaps principally, for the sake of being near me. While it was being fitted and furnished, he resided at Bath."—*Fraser's Magazine*, Jan., 1860.

## XII. MARLOW—"THE REVOLT OF ISLAM"

September 29, 1816—March 12, 1818

- A. BYRON Calumny—Helping Godwin again—Correcting "Childe Harold"—Suicide of Fanny Imlay—Leigh Hunt—His article on Shelley, Reynolds and Keats—"An Object of Compassion"—"Rimini"—Peacock's Novels—Suicide of Harriet Shelley—Her Life after the Separation—Hunt's Sustaining Friendship—Shelley Marries Mary—Godwin's "Evidence"—Shelley Refused the Custody of his Children—Birth of Allegra—"The Hermit of Marlow"—Letters to Leigh Hunt—Coleridge's "Sybilline Leaves"—"Frankenstein"—Horace Smith—"Laon and Cythna"—Mary's Book Refused—Shelley in London again—Proposed visit to Italy—Allegra—"Laon and Cythna" Explained—"An Address to the People"—Ill-health—Malthus—Baxter and Booth—"Revolt of Islam"—Ollier's Refusal—"History of a Six Weeks' Tour"—Ollier's "Altham"—Last Days in England.

### 241. TO LORD BYRON

[5 ABBEY CHURCHYARD], BATH,

September 29, 1816.

(Fragment)

. . . I saw Kinnaird,<sup>1</sup> and had a long talk with him. He informed me that Lady Byron was now in perfect health, that she was living with your sister. I felt much pleasure from this intelligence. I consider the latter part of it as affording a decisive contradiction to the only important calumny that ever was advanced against you. On this ground, at least, it will become the world hereafter to be silent. . .

<sup>1</sup> Hon. Douglas James William Kinnaird (1788-1830), Byron's friend, younger brother of Charles, eighth Baron Kinnaird, and a member of Ransom's, where Byron banked,

242. TO WILLIAM GODWIN  
(London)

5 ABBEY CHURCHYARD, BATH,  
[Postmark, Bath], October 2, 1816.

I am exceedingly sorry to disappoint you again. I cannot send you £300, because I have not £300 to send. I enclose within a few pounds, the wrecks of my late negotiation with my father.<sup>1</sup>

In truth I see no hope of my attaining speedily to such a situation of affairs as should enable me to discharge my engagements towards you. My father's main design, in all the transactions which I have had with him has gone to tie me up from all such irregular applications of my fortune. In this he might have failed had he not been seconded by Longdill, and between them both I have been encompassed with such toils as were impossible to be evaded. When I look back I do not see what else I could have done than submit: what is called firmness would have, I sincerely believe, left me in total poverty.

<sup>1</sup> Shelley had promised to send Godwin £300 on the expectation of receiving a considerable sum from his father to pay certain debts contracted on the faith of a successful issue of his negotiations of the spring. But these expectations were not realised, and Shelley was therefore unable to fulfil his promise to Godwin, who was sorely disappointed, having given a bill on demand for that amount to an exacting creditor. Godwin's novel, "Mandeville," was progressing favourably, but everything depended on his tranquillity of mind. He had told Shelley in August that the book would be better than "St. Leon," and would take place, next after "Caleb Williams." "I am in good tone and anxious to proceed. The tone I must confess is kept up with considerable effort, and is only preserved by a faith that relates to you, and a confident hope that the relief so long expected from your quarter will at length be fully realized. If I am disappointed in this, if my affairs in the meantime go to a wreck that can no longer be resisted, then the novel will never be finished." Such an appeal as this was particularly moving to Shelley, who prized inordinately Godwin's imaginative work; but to fulfil his engagements was not in his power. Such money as he had, however, he sent without delay."—Prof. Dowden's "Life of Shelley," Vol. II, p. 46.



In the present instance I expected to have saved 5 or £600 ; 300 of which, as I informed you, were devoted to you. I have saved only 248, my father having made an indispensable condition that all my debts should be paid. I do not think that anything can be done with Bryant. Turner, had he chosen, might have managed the affair with Dawe. But nothing is more evident than that this person has some malignant passions which he seeks to gratify at my expense and at yours.—I do not indeed know what can be done, except through private confidence.

Shall I conclude this unwelcome letter by assuring you of the continuance of those dispositions concerning your welfare which I have so often expressed ? Shall I say that I am ready to co-operate in whatever plan may be devised for your benefit.

P. B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed outside],  
WILLIAM GODWIN, Esq.,  
41 Skinner Street,  
Snow Hill,  
London.

243. TO JOHN MURRAY  
(London)

[No. 5 ABBEY CHURCHYARD, BATH,  
Oct[ober] 2, 1816.

MY DEAR SIR,

Be so kind as to address the proofs of "Childe Harold," when you print it, to me according to the above address. I shall remain here probably during the whole winter, and you may depend on no attention being spared on my part to render the proofs as correct as possible.

I imagine that Lord Byron is anxious that the poem should be committed to the press as soon as possible ; the time of publication of course depends upon your own discretion. For myself, I cannot but confess the anxiety I feel that the public should have an early opportunity of confirming—I will not say by a more extensive, but

by a profounder species of approbation—the superior merit which private judgment has already assigned to it.<sup>1</sup>

I have the honour to be, Dear Sir,

Your very obliged obedient servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

#### 244. To JOHN MURRAY

(London)

5 ABBEY CHURCHYARD, BATH,<sup>2</sup>

Oct[ober] 30, 1816.

DEAR SIR,

I observe with surprise that you have announced the appearance of "Childe Harold" and "Prisoner of Chillon" for so early a date as the 23rd of November. I should not do my duty to Lord Byron, who entrusted me with the MSS. of his Poems, if I did not remind you that it was his particular desire that I should revise the proofs before publication. When I had the pleasure of seeing you in London, I think I stated his Lordship's wishes on this subject to you, remarking at the same time that his wishes did not arise from a persuasion that I should pay more

<sup>1</sup> Shelley had brought the MS. of "Childe Harold," canto iii, with him from Switzerland, and although Byron had sent another copy to John Murray, he desired that in some particulars the MS. entrusted to Shelley should be preferred. In a letter from Byron to Murray, from Diodati, Geneva, Sept. 29, 1816, he says: "with regard to the price, [for "Childe Harold"] I have fixed none, but left it to Mr. Kinnaird, Mr. Shelley and yourself to arrange. Of course, they would do their best; and as to yourself, I knew you would make no difficulties." Shelley occupied himself with correcting Byron's proofs while at Bath, and the book was published before the end of the year.

<sup>2</sup> Early in October, Fanny Imlay had suddenly left Godwin's house, and had travelled through Bath and Bristol to Swansea. She did not visit Mary at Bath, but wrote from Bristol in such an alarming tone that Shelley immediately started for that town, but was unable to obtain any tidings of her. On Fanny's arrival at the Mackworth Arms Inn, Swansea, on the night of Oct. 9, she retired to rest, and she was found the next morning lying dead, with a bottle of laudanum beside her. Shelley went again on the 10th to Bristol, but it was not until two days later that he brought Mary the news of her unhappy sister's death.

attention to its accuracy than any other person whom you might select ; but because he communicated it to me immediately after composition, and did me the honour to entrust to my discretion, as to whether certain particular expressions should be retained or changed. All that was required was that I should see proofs before they were finally committed to the press. I wrote to you some weeks since, to this purpose. I have not received any answer.

Some mistake must have arisen, in what manner I cannot well conceive. You must have forgotten or misunderstood my explanations ; by some accident you cannot have received my letter. Do me the favour of writing by return of Post, and informing me what intelligence I am to give Lord Byron respecting the commission with which I was entrusted.

I have the honour to be, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,  
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

P.S.—I remark that it is advertised as " The Prisoners of Chillon." Lord Byron wrote it " Prisoner."

245. To J. J. PASCHOUD  
(Geneva)

12 NEW BOND ST[REET],<sup>1</sup> BATH,  
Nov[ember] 9, 1816.

(Fragment)

[*Directing the forwarding of some books.*]

. . . The translation which I have engaged to make of " Political Justice " shall not be delayed, if I understand from you that you continue to wish that it should be done. . .

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed to]  
MONSIEUR PASCHOUD,  
Librairie,  
Geneve, en Suisse.

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<sup>1</sup> This is the address where Clare Clairmont was lodging.

246. TO WILLIAM GODWIN  
(London)

BATH,  
November 24, 1816.

SIR,

I lament exceedingly that you supposed it possible, or even esteem it right, that I should submit to such a proposal as Dawe's. I lament that you could even permit me to accede to such an imposture. You will therefore be disappointed at my refusal—you will think me insensible, unjust, insincere. I regret that I must inspire you with such feelings, but I am persuaded that it is my duty not to submit to terms of so exorbitant a nature.

The conclusion of your letter adds to the reluctance of my refusal, but it does not render it the less firm.

I enclose a letter to Hume written principally for the purpose of being shown to Dawe. Possibly he will change his tone when he finds his tricks ineffectual. For nothing is more evident than that all he says are the excuses and subterfuges of a money-broker.

You will observe from the rough calculation in my letter to H. that he asks very nearly 25 per cent., and that I should throw away not £1,000, but £2,800.

The principles which pronounce on the injustice of my hereditary rights, are such, as rightly limited and understood, are far dearer to me than life.

But these principles teach me to set a high value on the power with which their violation may one day intrust me. They instruct me to be more, not less, cautious in alienating it.

Indeed, it would be no inconsiderable evil if such a remorseless, mean-spirited wretch as Dawe were to be presented with £2,800!

My refusal is therefore firm.—But depend on it that what could be done in 1814 could be done, and that on even better terms, now. Do not despair. Even Dawe

may retract and relent, or someone be found less exorbitant. I applied about a fortnight since to a quarter from which I had formerly obtained a supply, but have not received an answer.

The letters have arrived so late to-day, that I am obliged to write in haste if I would reply by return of post.

[Addressed outside],  
W. GODWIN, Esq.,  
41 Skinner Street,  
Snow Hill,  
London.

247. TO LEIGH HUNT  
(Hampstead)

MARLOW,<sup>1</sup>  
~ Dec[ember] 8, 1816.

I have received both your letters yesterday and to-day, and I accuse myself that my precipitancy should have given you the vexation you express. Your letters, however, give me unmingled pleasure, and that of a very exalted kind. I have not in all my intercourse with mankind experienced sympathy and kindness with which I have been so affected or which my whole being has so sprung forward to meet and to return. My communications with you shall be such as to attempt to deserve this

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<sup>1</sup> On Dec. 1st Shelley received at Bath a letter from Leigh Hunt, to which this letter is obviously a reply. In Mary's journal on December 6, she says: "Letter from Shelley; he has gone to visit Leigh Hunt," but he went to Peacock's house at Marlow first, from which this letter was written. Shelley was staying here while seeking for a house, and Mary, writing from Bath to Marlow on December 6, gives him some advice on the subject. "But in the choice of a residence, dear Shelley," she says, "pray be not too quick or attach yourself too much to one spot. Ah! were you indeed a winged Elf, and could soar over mountains and seas, and could pounce on the little spot! A house with a lawn, near a river or lake, noble trees or divine mountains—that should be our little mouse-hole to retire to. But never mind this; give me a garden, and *absentia* Claire, and I will thank my love for many favours."

fortunate distinction. Meanwhile, let me lay aside preliminaries and their reserve; let me talk with you as with an old friend.

First I will answer your questions. By some fatality I have seen every *Examiner*,<sup>1</sup> but that of last week. Since I received your letter yesterday, I have made every exertion to get a sight of it, unsuccessfully. All the people who take it in here have forwarded it to their friends at a distance. I hear there is one at a village five miles off; as it is very uncertain whether I shall be able to procure it, I will accept your kind offer of sending it to me. I take in the *Examiner* generally, and therefore will not trouble you to send your own copy.

Next, will I own the "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty?"<sup>2</sup> I do not care—as you like. And yet the poem was composed under the influence of feelings which agitated me even to tears, so that I think it deserves a better fate than

<sup>1</sup> The *Examiner* for December 1st, 1816, contains the article entitled "Young Poets," in which Leigh Hunt refers to the work of Shelley, John Hamilton Reynolds (miscalled "John Henry Reynolds"), and John Keats. Of Shelley he says: "The object of the present article is merely to notice three young writers, who appear to us to promise a considerable addition of strength to the new school. Of the first who came before us, we have, it is true, yet seen only one or two specimens, and these were no sooner sent us than we unfortunately mislaid them; but we shall procure what he has published, and if the rest answer to what we have seen, we shall have no hesitation in announcing him a very striking and original thinker. His name is Percy Bysshe Shelley, and he is the author of a poetical work entitled *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude*." These eight lines probably comprise the first public recognition of Shelley as a poet. To the other two poets more space is devoted, and a specimen of their work is given. Keats had not then published a volume, but Leigh Hunt had the good fortune of printing in this article for the first time the sonnet "On first looking into Chapman's Homer."

<sup>2</sup> Shelley had sent Hunt his "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" for insertion in the *Examiner*, where it appeared in the issue for Jan. 19, 1817, with the signature "Percy B. Shelley." Hunt states that the poem was originally signed *Elfin Knight*, Mary's familiar name for Shelley.

the being linked with so stigmatised and unpopular a name (so far as it is known) as mine. You will say that it is not thus, that I am morbidly sensitive to what I esteem the injustice of neglect—but I do not say that I am unjustly neglected, the oblivion which overtook my little attempt of "Alastor" I am ready to acknowledge was sufficiently merited in *itself*; but then it was not accorded in the correct proportion considering the success of the most contemptible drivellings. I am undeceived in the belief that I have powers deeply to interest, or substantially to improve, mankind. How far my conduct and my opinions have rendered the zeal and ardour with which I have engaged in the attempt ineffectual, I know not. Self love prompts me to assign much weight to a cause which perhaps has none. But thus much I do not seek to conceal from myself, that I am an outcast from human society; my name is execrated by all who understand its entire import—by those very beings whose happiness I ardently desire. I am an object of compassion to a few more benevolent than the rest, all else abhor and avoid me. With you, and perhaps some others (though in a less degree I fear) my gentleness and sincerity find favour, because they are themselves gentle and sincere: they believe in self devotion and generosity, because they are themselves generous and self devoted. Perhaps I should have shrunk from persisting in the task which I had undertaken in early life, of opposing myself in these evil times and among these evil tongues, to what I esteem misery and vice. If I must have lived in the solitude of the heart, fortunately my domestic circle incloses that within it which compensates for the loss. But these are subjects for conversation, and I find that in using the privilege which you have permitted me of friendship, I have indulged in that garrulity of self-love which only friendship can excuse or endure.

When will you send me your poems? I never knew that you had published any other than "Rimini," with which

I was exceedingly delighted. The *story* of the poem has an interest of a very uncommon and irresistible character,—though it appeared to me that you have subjected yourself to some rules in the composition which fetter your genius, and diminish the effect of the conceptions. Though in one sense I am no poet, I am not so insensible to poetry as to read “*Rimini*” unmoved.—When will you send me your other poems?<sup>1</sup>

Peacock is the author of “*Headlong Hall*,”—he expresses himself much pleased by your approbation—indeed, it is approbation which many would be happy to acquire! He is now writing “*Melincourt*” in the same style, but, as I judge, far superior to “*Headlong Hall*.” He is an amiable man of great learning, considerable taste, an enemy to every shape of tyranny and superstitious imposture. I am now on the point of taking the lease of a house among these woody hills, these sweet green fields, and this delightful river—where, if I should ever have the happiness of seeing you, I will introduce you to Peacock. I have nothing to do in London, but I am most strongly tempted to come, only to spend one evening with you; and if I can I will, though I am anxious as soon as my employments here are finished to return to Bath.

Last of all—you are in distress for a few hundred Pounds;<sup>2</sup>—I saw Lord Byron at Geneva, who expressed to me the high esteem which he felt for your character and worth.

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<sup>1</sup> Besides the boyish collection of “*Juvenilia*, 1801, the following volumes of Leigh Hunt's poetry had been published, “*The Feast of the Poets*,” 1814, and 1815, “*The Descent of Liberty, a Mask*,” 1815, and “*The Story of Rimini*,” 1816.

<sup>2</sup> In Mary's letter of December 6, quoted above, she there alludes to a sum of money that Shelley had already sent to Hunt. “*Leigh Hunt has not written. I would advise a letter addressed to him at the Examiner office, if there be no answer to-morrow. He may not be at the Vale of Health, for it is odd that he does not acknowledge the receipt of so large a sum.*” Prof. Dowden suggests that this money may have been conveyed to Hunt either for his private wants, or as a contribution to the relief of the distressed poor in Spitalfields, on whose behalf Hunt had pleaded in the *Examiner*.—“*Life of Shelley*,” Vol. II, p. 61.



I cannot doubt that he would hesitate in contributing at least £100 towards extricating one whom he regards so highly from a state of embarrassment. I have heard from him lately, dated from Milan ; and as he has entrusted me with one or two commissions, I do not doubt but my letter would reach him by the direction he gave me. If you feel any delicacy on the subject, may I write to him about it ? My letter shall express that zeal for your interests which I truly feel, and which would not confine itself to those barren protestations if I had the smallest superfluity.

My friend accepts your *interest* and is contented to be a Hebrew for your sake. But a request is made in return which in courtesy cannot be refused. There is some little literary luxury, some enjoyment of taste or fancy you have refused yourself, because you have not felt, through the difficulty of your situation, that you were entitled to indulge yourself in it. You are entreated,—and a refusal would give more pain than you are willing to inflict—to employ the enclosed in making yourself a present of this luxury, that may remind you of this not unfriendly contest, which has conferred a value on £5 which I believe it never had before.

Adieu,

Most affectionately yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

I will send you an "Alastor."

[Addressed outside],

LEIGH HUNT, Esq.,

Vale of Health,

Hampstead,

Near London.

248. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN

(Bath)

LONDON,

December 15 [16], 1816<sup>1</sup>.

I have spent a day, my beloved, of somewhat agonizing

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley returned to Bath on Dec. 14, from his visit to Leigh Hunt at Hampstead, and was much pleased with his new friend. On the day following he received the terrible tidings of Harriet

sensations, such as the contemplation of vice and folly and hard-heartedness, exceeding all conception, must produce. Leigh Hunt has been with me all day, and his delicate and tender attentions to me, his kind speeches of you, have sustained me against the weight of the horror of this event.

The children I have not got. I have seen Longdill, who recommends proceeding with the utmost caution and resoluteness; he seems interested. I told him I was under contract of marriage to you, and he said that, in such an event, all pretence to detain the children would cease. Hunt said very delicately that this would be soothing intelligence to you. Yes, my only hope, my darling love,

Shelley's suicide. After her separation from Shelley, Harriet had lived for some time at her father's house in Chapel Street. Mary writes in her diary in April, 1815, "We hear that Harriet has left her father's house," and shortly afterwards there is a record of two visits paid to her by Shelley. But in June, 1816, she addressed a letter to Mr. Newton from 23 Chapel Street, from which it would seem that she was still on good terms with her family. It has been stated that her father's door was shut against her by order of her sister. In November Shelley had applied to Thomas Hookham for news of Harriet, but in vain. Her last lodgings were at a house in Queen Street, Brompton, from which place she disappeared on Nov. 9th, and about a month later, on Dec. 15th, Hookham wrote to Shelley to say that her body had been taken out of the Serpentine on Dec. 10; that little information respecting her was laid before the jury at the coroner's inquest, and that her name had been given as that of Harriet Smith. He also mentioned that had she lived a little longer she would have given birth to a child. Shelley was deeply shocked at this awful calamity. Leigh Hunt, who was with him at this time, says "he never forgot it. For a time it tore his being to pieces." Shelley did not, however, regard himself as responsible for Harriet's tragic end. In writing to Southey some years later, he said: "I take God to witness, if such a Being is now regarding both you and me, and I pledge myself, if we meet, as perhaps you expect, before Him after death, to repeat the same in His presence—that you accuse me wrongfully. I am innocent of ill, either done or intended." Although Shelley had parted from his wife, he had not only made ample provision for her and his children, but had kept in touch with her movements. On the day that he received the news from Hookham, he went to London to claim his two children; he could not, however, have arrived till the evening, so that this letter must have been dated 15th instead of 16th by mistake.

this will be one among the innumerable benefits which you will have bestowed upon me, and which will still be inferior in value to the greatest of benefits—yourself. It is through you that I can entertain without despair the recollection of the horrors of unutterable villainy that led to this dark, dreadful death. I am to hear to-morrow from Desse<sup>1</sup> whether or no I am to engage in a contest for the children. At least it is consoling to know that its termination in your nominal union with me—that after having blessed me with a life, a world of real happiness—mere form appertaining to you will not be barren of good. . .

Everything tends to prove, however, that beyond the shock of so hideous a catastrophe having fallen on a human being once so nearly connected with me, there would in any case have been little to regret. Hookham, Longdill, every one, does me full justice ; bears testimony to the upright spirit and liberality of my conduct to her. There is but one voice in condemnation of the detestable Westbrook. If they should dare to bring it before Chancery, a scene of such fearful horror would be unfolded as would cover them with scorn and shame.

How is Claire ? I do not tell her, but I may tell you how deeply I am interested in her safety. I need not recommend her to your care. Give her any kind message from me, and calm her spirits as well as you can. I do not ask you to calm your own.

I am well in health though somewhat faint and agitated ; but the affectionate attentions shown me by Hunt have been sustainers and restoratives more than I can tell. Do you, dearest and best, seek happiness—where it ought to reside—in your own pure and perfect bosom ; in the thoughts of how dear and how good you are to me ; how wise and how extensively beneficial you are perhaps destined to become.

Remember my poor babes, Ianthe and Charles. How tender and dear a mother they will find in you—darling William, too! My eyes overflow with tears. To-morrow I will write again.

Your own affectionate SHELLEY.

249. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT  
(Bath)

LONDON,

December 30, 1816.

DEAREST CLARE,

Your letter to-day relieved me from a weight of painful anxiety. Thank you, too, my kind girl for not expressing much of what you must feel, the loneliness and the low spirits which arise from being entirely left. Nothing could be more provoking than to find all this unnecessary. However, they will now be satisfied and quiet.

We cannot come to-morrow, there being no inside place in any of the coaches, or in either of the mails. I have secured a place for Wednesday (January 1, 1817)—the day following that on which you will receive this letter—so that you will infallibly see us on that evening. I may say that it was by a most fortunate chance that I secured the places that I did.

The ceremony,<sup>1</sup> so magical in its effects, was undergone this morning at St. Mildred's Church in the City. Mrs. G[odwin] and G[odwin] were both present, and appeared to feel no little satisfaction. Indeed Godwin throughout has shown the most polished and courteous attentions to me and Mary. He seems to think no kindness too great in compensation for what has passed. I confess I am not entirely

<sup>1</sup> Shelley's marriage to Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, on the morning of December 30, 1816, the date of this letter.

Deceived by this, though I cannot make my vanity wholly insensible to certain attentions paid in a manner studiously flattering. Mrs. G. presents herself to me in her real attributes of affectation, prejudice and heartless pride. Towards her, I confess I never feel an emotion of anything but antipathy. Her sweet daughter is very dear to me.

We left the Hunts yesterday morning, and spent the evening at Skinner Street, not unpleasantly. We had a bed in the neighbourhood and breakfasted with them before the marriage. Very few inquiries have been made of you, and those not of a nature to show that their suspicions have been alarmed. Indeed, all is safe there.

I write to Clairmont by to-day's post, inclosing him £20. So that you see our expected advantage from added income this quarter comes to very little. Do not answer our letter, as we shall be on our way to you before it can reach London. The G.'s give the most singular account of Mrs. Boinville, etc.

I will not tell you how dreadfully melancholy Skinner Street appears with all its associations. The most horrid thought is how people can be merry there! But I am resolved to overcome such sensations. If I do not destroy them I may be myself destroyed.

The Baxters, we hear, have suddenly lost all their fortune, and are reduced to the lowest poverty.

Adieu, my dear. Keep up your spirits and manage your health till we come back. It will be Wednesday evening at nine o'clock. Adieu, my dear—kiss Willy and yourself for me.

Ever affectionately yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

Mary can't write, being all day with Mrs. G.

[Addressed outside],  
Mrs. CLAIRMONT,  
12 New Bond Street, Bath.

250. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY  
(Bath)

LONDON,

January 11, 1816 [error for 1817].

MY DEAR LOVE,

I relate to you all that I have learned and all that has happened first. I saw Longdill early this morning, and have spent the whole day at his chambers. From him I learned that, after receiving notice from Dessc of Chancery proceedings, he had made himself acquainted with the *law of the point*. The only manner in which I could get at the children in the *common course of law* is by *habeas corpus*, and that supposes a delay of some weeks. You will see that the whole thing must be decided in Chancery before that time, and that if I could succeed at common law, my situation would be still the same with respect to Chancery, and that possession would in no manner ameliorate, but rather the contrary, my situation. Their process is the most insidiously malignant that can be conceived. They have filed a bill to say that I published "Queen Mab," that I avow myself to be an Atheist and a republican, with some other imputations of an infamous nature. This, by Chancery law, I must *deny* or *admit* upon oath, and then it seems that it rests in the *mere* discretion of the Chancellor to decide whether those are fit grounds for refusing me my children. They cannot have them at any rate; *my* father or *my* nearest relations are the persons whom the Chancellor will intrust with them, if they must be denied me. It is therefore sheer revenge. If I admit myself, or if Chancery decides that I ought not to have the children because I am an infidel: then the W[estbrook]s will make that decision a basis for a criminal information or common libel attack.

But there is hopes by watchful resistance that the whole of this detestable conspiracy will be overthrown. For if the Chancellor should decide not to hear their cause; and if an answer on oath is so convincing as to effect this,

they are defeated. They do not tell Harriet's story, I mean the circumstances of her death, in their allegations against me.—They evidently [would]<sup>1</sup> but that it makes against themselves. They attack you and Godwin by stating that I became acquainted with you whilst living with Harriet, and that Godwin is the author of "Political Justice," and other impious and seditious writings.

I learnt just now from Godwin that he has evidence that Harriet was unfaithful to me *four months* before I left England with you. If we can succeed in establishing this, *our* connection will receive an additional sanction, and plea be overborne. On the 19th the Chancellor begins to sit, and it must be decided instantly—from the nature of the case. I know not when, or whether at all, before that day I can return to Bath. How painful in these difficult, and in one sense tremendous circumstances it is to me to be deprived of the counsel of your judgment and the consolation of your dear presence! I must remain in London—I must attend to every, the minutest stage of the answer which is to be drawn up on my side. My story is what I have to tell. My evidence and my witnesses must be collected in the short space of five days. Besides I must be present. How much depends on this! Almost all besides that inviolable happiness which whilst you and your affection remains to me, can never pass away, is suspended perhaps on the issue of this trial—<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The word 'would' seems to have been omitted."

<sup>2</sup> Shelley was at Bath on Jan. 3, 1817, as he addressed a note to his bankers on that date from 5 Abbey Churchyard, but early in the month he again left Mary and Clare Clairmont and proceeded to London, his object being to consult with his lawyers regarding the case that was to come on shortly for hearing in the Court of Chancery respecting the custody of his children by Harriet, Ianthe Eliza and Charles Bysshe. The plaintiffs in the case were the children, who, at the time of their mother's death, were in the care of a clergyman at Warwick. The defendants comprised John Westbrook and his daughter Eliza, Mr. Higham, Mr. Farthing Beauchamp (whom Eliza

251. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY  
(Bath)

LONDON,

[? January, 1817.]

Cheer up, my beloved Mary ; I have firm friends here. I am not, as might have happened once, to be oppressed in secrecy and solitude. Depend, too, on the utmost foresight and caution to be used on my part. I am to attend a consultation of counsel early on Monday morning.

How is sweetest babe ? How do his fair blue eyes look to-day ? Kiss him tenderly for me.

How is poor Clare ? Give my love to her, and read her or tell her the substance of my letter. I hope her spirits are not much [word undeciphered] in her present situation. She will see that in a matter so serious as that in which I am engaged I cannot return.

Now my darling Pecksie,<sup>1</sup> don't fancy I am disquieted so as to be unwell. Don't think I have any of those misgivings and perturbations which vitally affect the heart. I am, it is true, earnest and active, but as far as relates

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Westbrook afterwards married), Shelley and Sir Timothy Shelley. The case was heard before Lord Chancellor Eldon on Friday, Jan. 24, 1817, his judgment being given on March 27. He considered Shelley's "principles as highly immoral," and that he would not be justified in delivering the children over to their father exclusively for their education. It was not formally decided to whom the education of the children should be entrusted until Shelley was in Italy. But he was allowed to propose the names of persons for that office, and after the rejection of his solicitor, Longdill, Dr. and Mrs. Hume of Hanwell, were accepted. The boy was to be placed at a private school until the age of seven, when he was to pass to a public school and one of the universities : the girl was to be educated at home by Mrs. Hume. The allowance for the children's maintenance was fixed at £200, £80 of which were to be paid by Mr. Westbrook, and £120 by Shelley. Professor Dowden has given an exhaustive account of these Chancery proceedings in his "Life of Shelley," from which the brief particulars in this note are derived.

During his absence, Clara Clairmont gave birth (on Jan. 12) to a girl, the daughter of Lord Byron, whom they called Alba, until later the names of Clara Allegra were chosen.

<sup>1</sup> Shelley's pet name for Mary. It has been suggested that he borrowed it from Mrs. Trimmer's tale of "The Robins."



to all highest hopes and you, my only treasure, quite happy.  
So adieu. You shall hear to-morrow night if possible.

Your own affectionate

SHELLEY.

Don't be disappointed if I send not by the mail. Maybe  
I can't.

252. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT  
(Bath)

[LONDON,

Postmark] Jan[uary] 30, 1817.

Mary has written to you, dearest Clare, in better spirits, and as a reward of her good spirits, with better news than I. In fact, that about Hunt was overruled. It only serves to exhibit the malice of these monsters.

I have little doubt in my own mind but that they will finally succeed in the criminal part of the business. I mean that some such punishment as imprisonment and fine will be awarded me, by a jury. But do not disquiet yourself. Do not allow this to be a matter of present agitation to you. It is not a thing that can be decided within six months, an interval pregnant with many hopes and fears, and if well cultivated fruitful in joys which might make a bower of roses of the worst dungeon that tyranny could invent. Don't tease yourself, Clara. The greatest good you can do me is to keep well and quiet yourself, and of that you are well aware.

Mary tells me that she never engaged the lodgings for a month, or that if she did so, one fortnight of the time is already past.

[Addressed outside],

Miss JANE CLAIRMONT,

P. B. SHELLEY, Esq.,

12 New Bond Street,

Bath.

## 253. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[GREAT MARLOW], March 9, 1817.

MY DEAR GODWIN,

I wish you knew me better than to be vexed or disappointed at anything I do. Either circumstances of petty difficulty and embarrassment find some peculiar attraction in me, or I have a fainter power of repulsion with regard to them. Certain it is that nothing gives me serener and more pure pleasure than your society, and that if in breaking an engagement with you I have forced an exercise of your philosophy upon you, I have in my own person incurred a penalty which mine has yet taught me to alleviate. It gives me pain too that I cannot send the whole amount you want. I enclose a cheque to within a few pounds of my possessions. This is, in fact, the most unlucky time for me; I shall never be so low again. I do much rely on loans, or indeed on any one besides Dawe.

We are immersed in all kinds of confusion here. Mary said you meant to come hither soon enough to see the leaves come out. Which leaves did you mean, for the wild-briar buds are already unfolded? And what of "Mandeville," and how will he bear to be transplanted here? All my people, little Willy not excepted, desire their kindest love to you. I beg to unite in kind remembrances to Mrs. Godwin, whose health is I hope improved, and remain my dear friend.

Yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

To

MR. WILLIAM GODWIN,  
London.

## 254. TO CHARLES OLLIER

[Before March 14, 1817.]

DEAR SIR,

I inclose you the *Revise*<sup>1</sup> which may be put to press

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley's pamphlet "A Proposal / for putting / Reform  
to the Vote / Throughout the Kingdom. / By the Hermit of

when corrected, and the sooner the better. I inclose you also a list<sup>1</sup> of persons to whom I wish copies to be sent *from the Author*, as soon as possible. I trust you will be good enough to take the trouble off my hands.—

Do not advertise sparingly: and get as many booksellers as you can to take copies on their own account. Sherwood, Neely & Co., Hone of Newgate Street, Ridgeway, and

Marlow. / For a full account of this pamphlet and of the public events that led Shelley to propose a plebiscite see Prof. Dowden's "Life of Shelley," Vol. II, p. 108, and Mr. H. Buxton Forman's preface to the Shelley Society facsimile of the manuscript of this tract, issued in 1887, in which this letter was first printed. Leigh Hunt was undoubtedly interested in the pamphlet, as it was printed and published by his friends Keyneil, and the Olliers who are here mentioned for the first time in Shelley's correspondence.

[<sup>1</sup> The list mentioned in the above letter.]

Sir Francis Burdett, M.P.*	Mr. I. Thomas, St. Albans, Mon.
Mr. Peters, of Cornwall.	Mr. Philipps, Whitston, Mon.
Mr. Brougham, M.P.*	Mr. Andrew Duncan, Provost of
Lord Grosvenor.*	Arbroath.
Lord Holland.*	Mr. Alderman Godbehere.*
Lord Grey.*	Mr. Jones Burdett.*
Mr. Cobbett.*	Mr. Hallet, of Berkshire (5
Mr. Waithman.*	copies).
Mr. Curran.	The London Hampden Club (10
Hon. Douglas Kinnaird.*	copies).
Hon. Thos. Brand, M.P.*	The Editors of the <i>Statesman</i> ,*
Lord Cochrane, M.P.	the <i>Morning Chronicle</i> ,* and
Sir R. Heron, M.P.	the <i>Independent Whig</i> .*
The Lord Mayor.*	Mr. Montgomery (the Poet), of
Mr. Montague Burgoyne	Sheffield.
Major Cartwright.*	Mr. R. Owen, of Lanark.
Messrs. Taylor, Sen. and Jun.,	Mr. Madocks, M.P.
of Norwich.	Mr. George Ensor.
Mr. Place, Charing Cross.*	Mr. Bruce.
Mr. Walker, of Westminster.	Mr. Sturch (of Westminster).*
Lord Essex.*	Mr. Creevy, M.P.
Capt. Burnet, M.P.*	Genl. Sir R. Ferguson, M.P.*
The Birmingham Hampden	
Club (5 copies).	

Mr. H. Buxton Forman says that "against the names marked with the asterisks the word *sent* was written in the original list, and not by Shelley. This appears to have been done in Messrs. Ollier's office, and shows that the copies were really sent to the persons thus indicated." The list is interesting as giving the names of a number of men in whose opinions Shelley was more or less interested.

Stockdale are people likely to do so.—Send 20 or 30 copies to Messrs. Hookham & Co., Bond Street, without explanation. I have arranged with them.

Send twenty copies to me addressed to Mr. Hunt, who will know what to do with them if I am out of town.—

Your very obedient Ser[van]t,  
P. B. SHELLEY.

255. TO CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

MARLOW,  
March 14, 1817.

(Fragment)

. . . Mr. Hunt has, I believe, commissioned you to get for me a proof impression of a print done from a drawing by Harlowe of Lord Byron. . . How does the pamphlet sell ?

P. B. SHELLEY.

Mr. OLLIER,  
Bookseller.

256. TO WILLIAM GODWIN  
(London)

MARLOW,  
March 22, 1817.

MY DEAR GODWIN,

Marshall's proposal is one in which, however reluctantly, I must refuse to engage.<sup>1</sup> It is that I should grant bills to the amount of his debts, which are to expire in thirty months. This is a situation in which it might become me to place myself for the sake of some very dear friend, or some person who might have an irresistible public claim, but which, if it were only in the possible arrival of such

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<sup>1</sup> Godwin had drawn up in 1816 an appeal for assistance on behalf of his friend, James Marshall.

emergencies, I feel that with respect to Marshall I am bound to avoid. Do not infer that I deny him to have just claims on my assistance, which, if I were in possession of my paternal estate, I should hasten to fulfil.

It was spring when I wrote to you, and winter when your answer arrived. But the frost is very transitory, every bud is ready to burst into leaf. It is a nice distinction you make between the development and the complete expansion of the leaves. The oak and the chestnut, the latest and the earliest parents of foliage, would afford you a still subtler subdivision, which would enable you to defer the visit from which we expect so much delight for six weeks. I hope we shall really see you before that time, and that you will allow the chestnut or any other impartial tree, as he stands in the foreground, to be considered as a virtual representation of the rest.

Will is quite well and very beautiful. Mary unites with me in presenting her kind remembrances to Mrs. Godwin, and begs her most affectionate love to you.

Yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

Have you read "Melincourt?"<sup>1</sup> It would entertain you. Will you be kind enough to pay Newberry, the newsman, for me? I enclose cheque.

To

Mr. WILLIAM GODWIN,  
London.

257. TO LEIGH AND MARIANNE HUNT  
(London

GREAT MARLOW,

June 29, 1817.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I performed my promise, and arrived here the night

<sup>1</sup> Peacock's novel, "Melincourt," was published anonymously by Hookham, in 1817. A French translation appeared in the following year, and many years later, in 1856, when the novel was re-issued, it appeared as "Melincourt, or Sir Oran Haut-Ton."

after I set off. Everybody up to this minute has been and continues well. I ought to have written yesterday, for to-day, I know not how, I have so constant a pain in my side, and such a depression of strength and spirits, as to make my holding the pen whilst I write to you an almost intolerable exertion. This, you know, with me is transitory. Do not mention that I am unwell to your nephew<sup>1</sup>; for the advocate of a new system of diet is held bound to be invulnerable by disease, in the same manner as the sectaries of a new system of religion are held to be more moral than other people, or as a reformed parliament must at least be assumed as the remedy of all political evils. No one will change the diet, adopt the religion, or reform parliament else.

Well, I am very anxious to hear how you get on, and I intreat Marianne to excite Hunt not to delay a minute in writing the necessary letters, and in informing me of the result. Kings are only to be approached through their ministers; who indeed, as Marianne should know to her cost, if she don't take care, are responsible not only for all their commissions, but, a more dreadful responsibility, for all their *omissions*. And I know not who has a right to the title of King, if not according to the Stoics, he to whom the King of Kings had delegated the prerogative of lord of the creation.

Let me know how Harry gets on, and make my best respects to your brother and Mrs. Hunt. Adieu.

Always most affectionately yours,  
P. B. S.

(By Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley)

You may see by this letter that Shelley is very unwell—he always writes in this manner when ill. He was well yesterday until the evening, but to-day he is worse than

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<sup>1</sup> The son of Leigh Hunt's brother John, also mentioned in this letter. Henry L. Hunt was afterwards a London publisher. His name appears with his father's on the title page of Shelley's "Posthumous Poems," 1824.

I have known him for some time. Perhaps the decrease of heat in the weather has to do with it.

The babes are all well. John has been a very good boy, and Mary better within the last day or two. Swynburne (*sic*) is quite well.

What about the Alpha Cottage? It is dear and I should think too far from the theatres, is there another choice?

Please Mary Anne send flannel for petticoats and flannels, and a pattern of the latter, and lawn not too expensive with a pattern shirt and cap.

The statues are not of a snowy but of a milky whiteness, but I think begin to look more creamy to-day.

Miss Kent is very attentive to the children. She bids me tell you that they are well, and that she does not write to-day.

How do you like Canova—one of you write and tell me a little news of yourselves.

You know the news we have had concerning the little faithless Clare is of course unhappy and consequently cross or so. I do not wonder that she should be unhappy I suppose she is over head and ears in love with some Venetian. Give our love to Thornton.<sup>1</sup>

Adieu, little babes.—Take care not to loose one another in the streets for fear one of you should be kidnapped, but take hold of one another's hands and walk pretty.

Affectionately yours,

M. W. S.

[Postmark] 10 o'clock, Jy. 1, 1817.

[Addressed outside],

LEIGH HUNT, Esq.,

J. HUNT, Esq.,

Maida Vale, Paddington,  
London.

<sup>1</sup> John, Mary and Swinburne, were children of Leigh Hunt who had evidently been staying with the Shelleys. Marianne (usually so spelt), was Leigh Hunt's wife, Miss (Bessy) Kent, her sister, and Thornton was the Hunts' eldest son.

258. MESSRS. OLLIER  
(London)

MARLOW,

July 13, 1817.

DEAR SIR,

Be so obliging to send me *immediately* "Sibylline Leaves,"<sup>1</sup> by S. T. Coleridge." I should receive it the same night if on receipt of this you would have the goodness to send wherever it is published, and direct the messenger to take it to the Marlow Coach office before he returns.

Dear Sir,

Your very obedt. Servt.

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed outside],  
Messrs. OLLIER,  
Welbeck Street,  
London.

259. To CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

MARLOW,

August 3, 1818 [for 1817].

DEAR SIR,

I send you with this letter a manuscript,<sup>2</sup> which has been consigned to my care by a friend in whom I feel considerable interest. I do not know how far it consists with your plan of business to purchase the copyrights, or a certain interest in the copyrights, of any works which should appear to promise success. I should certainly

<sup>1</sup> "Sibylline Leaves" was published in 1817.

<sup>2</sup> Of Mary Shelley's novel, which John Murray and Ollier declined to publish. It was afterwards issued by another firm of publishers with the following title: "Frankenstein; / or, / The Modern Prometheus, / in three volumes. / [quotation from "Paradise Lost"] Vol. I, etc. / Printed for / Lackington, Hughes, Harding, Mavor & Jones, / Finsbury Square, / 1818."



prefer that some such arrangement as this should be made, if on consideration you could make an offer which I should feel justified to my friend in accepting. How far that can be you will be the better able to judge after a perusal of the MS. Perhaps you will do me the favour of communicating your decision to me as early as you conveniently can.

I remain, dear sir,

Your faithful, obedient servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

Do you know is Taylor's "Pausanias"<sup>1</sup> to be purchased, and at what price?

Be so kind as to tell me also is Martyn's "Georgics"<sup>2</sup> of Virgil, printed in a very large octavo edition, to match the "Eclogues?" I wish an octavo edition of Moore's new poem<sup>3</sup> to be half-bound for me. I enclose a note to Mr. Hunt, which you will have the kindness to put in the post for me.

## 230. TO LEIGH HUNT

MARLOW,

August 3, 1817.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You tell me nothing of what it most interests me to hear. I want to know if you have made any and what progress in such a negotiation as I endeavoured to effectuate in Town for you? I cannot tell whether you deserve forgiveness for your trip over the book until I know how this is. To be sure it would be a very horrid thing if you have done nothing towards such a complete settlement and yet have put £60 out of your possession, and that with I don't

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<sup>1</sup> "The Description of Greece by Pausanias, with notes, 1794, translated by Thomas Taylor the Platonist (1758-1835)."

<sup>2</sup> See note, letter No. 164.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Moore's poem, "Lalla Rookh," published in 1817.

know how many bills coming due, and that odious November frowning the last object in this vista. In fact I should imagine among your intimate friends nothing could be more easy than to arrange a loan on the terms and in the manner that I suggested. Your Brother<sup>1</sup> I do not doubt will or can do nothing. But there is Keats, who certainly *can*, and Alsager, from whom I should expect much. The persons to whom I applied, as you well know, were merely men of business. I have no private friends. My applications, of course, were unsuccessful, and my resources for application soon exhausted. If you have nothing; all that remains is Horace Smith; and if we are reduced to make applications to him, by the pressure of the difficulties that approach you with November, you and I must consider what we must say to him. He is not in Town now, but I suppose will soon arrive. Meanwhile, my dear Hunt, pray answer me on this subject; as all other bills and affairs are comparatively of small importance. If I were not persuaded that my own quarters of application are entirely exhausted, at least until H. Smith arrives, I should have come to Town before this time. Meanwhile let me trust you to yourself.

Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to learn your comfortable mode of life. I shall feel the greatest satisfaction in paying you an early visit. I scarcely needed to hear that you are economical. But I am glad to discover that you are actually employed, and that on some original work. My best wishes also for the success of all criminals, even though invisible. It is the most comical thing in the world: you write accounts of your good behaviour to me as if I were some antient and wrinkled, but rather good-natured grand-uncle. Now this is a new feeling for me. I have been accustomed to consider myself as the most imprudent and [un]accountable of mankind.

Many thanks for the expected parcel, the contents will

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<sup>1</sup> John Hunt, joint-proprietor with Leigh Hunt, of the *Examiner*.

be highly prized by the individuals to whom they are addressed. Clare [? word torn] thanks you, which she does very sincerely, for the music. Mary continues pretty well and sends her kind love and thanks for all favours. Bye-the-bye I have sent a MS.<sup>1</sup> to Ollier concerning the true author of which I entreat you to be silent, if you should be asked any question. Mary's love to Marianne. She is very anxious about a nurse, and hopes Marianne will be kind enough to send an answer to her letter as soon as she can.

I have arrived at the 380th stanza of my Poem.<sup>2</sup>

Ever my dear Hunt,

Most faithfully and affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

231. TO CHARLES OLLIER

(London)

MARLOW,

August 8, 1817.

DEAR SIR,

I wish you to send me together with "Lalla Rookh," if it will be ready in a few days, a copy of Dr. Percy's

<sup>1</sup> Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein," which Ollier declined to publish.

<sup>2</sup> "Laon and Cythna; / or / The Revolution / of / The Golden City: / a vision of the Nineteenth Century. / In the Stanza of Spenser. / By / Percy B. Shelley. / ΔΟΣ ΠΟΥ ΣΤΗ ΚΑΙ ΚΟΣΜΟΝ ΚΙΝΗΣΩ / Archimedes, / London. / Printed for Sherwood, Neely & Jones, Paternoster- / Row; and C. and J. Ollier, Welbeck Street: / By B. McMillan, Bow-Street, Covent-Garden. / 1818." Mrs. Shelley says, in her note to this poem, that it "was written in his boat, as it floated under the beech groves at Bisham, or during his wanderings in the neighbouring country which is distinguished for its peculiar beauty." According to Peacock, Shelley wrote "Laon and Cythna" in the summer of 1817, "chiefly on a seat on a high prominence in Bisham wood, where he passed whole mornings with a blank book and a pencil." Shelley tells us in his preface that little more than six months were occupied in its composition. "That period has been devoted to the task with unremitting ardour and enthusiasm." It was completed by September 23rd 1817.

"Northern Antiquities." If the former is not at present ready I wish the latter to come immediately.

May I trouble you with a commission, and is it in your range of transactions to undertake it? I published some time since a poem called "Alastor," at Baldwin's: the sale, I believe, was scarcely anything, but as the printer has sent me in his account I wish to know also how my account stands with the publisher. He had no interest in the work, nor do I know anyone else had. It is scarcely worth while to [do]<sup>1</sup> anything more with it than to procure a business-like reply on the subject of the amount of what is to pay or receive. In case this commission is unusual or disagreeable to you for any reason of which I may be ignorant, I beg that you will not scruple to decline it.

I hope "Frankenstein" did not give you bad dreams, and remain, dear sir,

Your very obedient servant,

P. B. SHELLEY.

Can you lend me the sixth volume of Gibbon's "Rome"?

Mr. OLLIER,  
Bookseller,  
3 Welbeck Street, London.

## 262. TO MARIANNE HUNT

(Written by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley)

MARLOW,

August 16, 1817.

MY DEAR MARIANNE,

In writing your congratulations to Shelley on his birthday did not your naughty heart smite you with remorse? Did you not promise to look at some brooches, and send me the descriptions and prices?—But the 4th of August arrived and I had no present!

I am exceedingly obliged to you for the loan of the caps. But a nurse. I have a great aversion to the having a Marlow woman,—but I must be provided by the 20th.

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<sup>1</sup> Word torn off.

What am I to do? I dare say Mrs. Lucas is out at present, but she may be disengaged by that time.

I am sorry to observe by your letter that you are in low spirits. Cheer up, my dear little girl, and resolve to be happy. Let me know how it is with you, and how your health is as your time advances. If it were of any use I would say a word or two against your continuing to wear stays. Such confinement cannot be either good for you or the child; and as to shape, I am sure they are very far from becoming.

We are all well here. Our dog, who is a malicious beast whom we intend to send away, has again bitten poor little William without any provocation, for I was with him, and he went up to him to stroke his face when the dog snapped at his fingers. Miss Alba is perfectly well and thriving. She crows like a little cock, although (as Shelley bids me say) she is a hen.

Our sensations of indignation have been a little excited this morning by the decision of the Master of Chancery. He says the children are to go to this old clergyman in Warwickshire, who is to stand instead of a parent. An old fellow whom no one knows, and [who] never saw the children. This is somewhat beyond credibility did we not see it in black and white. Longdill is very angry that his proposition is rejected, and means to appeal from the Master to the Lord Chancellor.

I cannot find the sheet of Mrs. T. W. I send you two or three things of yours—the stone cup and the soap dish must wait until someone goes up to town.

I am afraid Hunt takes no exercise or he would not be so ill. I see, however, that you go to the play tolerably often. How are you amused?

The gown must not be dear. But you are as good a judge as I of what to give Milly as a kind of payment from Miss Clifford's mamma for the trouble she has had.

Longdill thought £100 per annum sufficient for both

Shelley's children, to provide them with clothes and everything. Why then should we pay £70 for A[ll]egra ?

The country is very pleasant just now, but I see nothing of it beyond the garden. I am *ennuied*, as you may easily imagine, from want of exercise which I cannot take. The cold bath is of great benefit to me. By-the-bye, what are we to do with it ? Have you a place for its reception ? It is of such use for H[unt]'s health that you ought not to be without it ; we can easily get another. If you should chance to hear of any very amusing book send it in the parcel if you can borrow it from Ollier.

Adieu. Take care of yourself, and do not be dispirited. All will be well one day I do not doubt.

I send you £3.

Shelley sends his love to you all, and thanks for your good wishes and promised present. Pray when is this intended parcel to come ?

Affectionately yours,

M. W. S.

(Written by Shelley)

I will write to Hunt to-morrow or the day after. Meanwhile kindest remembrances to all, and thanks for your dreams in my favour. Your incantations have not been *quite* powerful enough to expel evil from all revolutions of time. Poor Mary's book came back with a refusal, which has put me rather in ill spirits. Does any kind friend of yours, Marianne, know any bookseller, or has any influence with one ? Any of those good tempered Robinsons ? All these things are affairs of interest and preconception.

You have seen Clarke about this loan. Well, is there any proposal—Anything in bodily shape ? My signature makes any security infallible in fact though not in law,—even if they would not take Hunt's—I shall have more to say on this.

The while—

Your faithful friend,

P. B. S.

263. TO LACKINGTON, ALLEN &amp; CO.

(London)

GREAT MARLOW, BUCKS,

August 22, 1817.

GENTLEMEN,

I ought to have mentioned that the novel<sup>1</sup> which I sent you is not my own production, but that of a friend who not being at present in England cannot make the correction you suggest. As to any mere inaccuracies of language I should feel myself authorized to amend them when revising proofs. With respect to the terms of publication, my first wish certainly was to receive on my friend's behalf an adequate price for the copyright of the MS. As it is, however, I beg to submit the following proposal, which I hope you will think fair, particularly as I understand it is an arrangement frequently made by Booksellers with Authors who are new to the world.—It is that you should take the risk of printing, advertising, etc., entirely on yourselves and, after full deduction being made from the profits of the work to cover these expenses that the clear produce, both of the first edition and of every succeeding edition should be divided between you and the author. I cannot in the author's part disclaim all interest in the first edition, because it is possible that there may be no demand for another, and then the profits, however small, will be all that will accrue.

I hope on consideration that you will not think such an arrangement as this unreasonable, or one to which you will refuse your assent.

Gentlemen, I am

Your very obt. sert.,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed outside],

MESSRS. LACKINGTON, ALLEN & CO.,  
Finsbury Square,  
London.

<sup>1</sup> MRS. SHELLEY'S "Frankenstein."

264. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY  
(Marlow)

[LONDON],<sup>1</sup>

October 6, 1817.

You will not see me to-morrow. I will try, if possible, to come by the Wednesday's coach, if I do not hear anything in the meantime from you to detain me.

My own Mary, would it not be better for you to come to London at once? I think we could quite as easily do something with the house if you were in London—that is to say, all of you—as in the country.

In that case I would advise the packing up of all the books which we determined to take with us in a large box, and sending them here in the first instance. I would then lock up the library, and leave the cook in the house until something was done; first seeing Maddocks, and putting the safety of the whole in his charge. I mean you should do that if you like this proposal, if not write instantly, directing to Longdill's, or else I shall not get your letter in time. Write at all events, and if you negative my proposal, I will come down the same evening, if possible or at least will write by the coach, and come down the next.

We must go to Italy, on every ground. This weather does me great mischief. I nurse myself, and these kind people nurse me with great care. I think of you, my own beloved, and study the minutest things relative to my health. I suffer to-day with violent pain in the side, which prevents me to-day from going out at all. I have

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley went to London on September 23 (with the manuscript of his poem) accompanied by Clare, to consult Mr. William Lawrence, a pupil of Abernethy, with regard to his health. He visited Hunt at his new residence, 13 Lisson Grove, during the latter part of his stay in town. The physician recommended change of air and scene, and Shelley was inclined towards spending the winter in Italy, on his own account, and in order to place Alba (the name by which Allegra was known at this time) under her father's care.



thus put off engagements with Longdill and Godwin, which must be done to-morrow.

I have borrowed £250 from Horace Smith, which is now at my banker's.

Dearest and best of living beings, how much do your letters console me when I am away from you! Your letter to-day gave me the greatest delight; so soothing; so powerful, and quiet are your expressions, that it is almost like folding you to my heart. To-morrow, therefore, beloved, I shall not come, but the day after certainly, if you decide on that.

I should take rather spacious lodgings if you come up.

I shall forget none of your commissions.

Kiss all the little ones; poor little William—is he so cold?—and Alba and Clara.<sup>1</sup>

My most affectionate love to Claire, and tell her that I have offered her book to Lackington and to Taylor and Hessey, and that they have both declined.

I can scarcely write to-day, but shall be better to-morrow. Adieu, my dearest love; twenty kisses to your sweet lips.

P. B. S.

265. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

(Marlow)

[LONDON,

October 8, 1817.]

MY SWEETEST AND ONLY LOVE,

The anxiety which I have suffered for the last two days has been very great. I did not get your letter till this morning, or rather this evening, when I went to Longdill's. I sent and went in vain to Hookham's. I am now relieved, and perhaps she whom I love far more than myself, and

<sup>1</sup> Shelley's daughter, Clara Everina, born on September 2, 1817, and named after Clare Clairmont, and (apparently) Mary Shelley's aunt, Everina Wollstonecraft.

whose anxieties are far more painful to me than my own, is at this moment wondering if I shall come this evening, and will be so disappointed if I do not. I shall not come. I waited and waited for your letter, and was too late for the coach.

Now, dearest, let me talk to you. I think we ought to go to Italy. I think my health might receive a renovation there, for want of which, perhaps, I shall never entirely overcome that state of diseased action which is so painful to my beloved. I think Alba ought to be with her father. This is a thing of incredible importance to the happiness, perhaps, of many beings. It might be managed without our going there. Yes; but not without an expense which would in fact suffice to settle us comfortably in a spot where I might be regaining that health which you consider so valuable. It is valuable to you, my own dearest I see too plainly that you will never be quite happy till I am well. Of myself I do not speak, for I feel only for you.

First, then, Money. I am sure that if I ask Horace Smith he will lend me £200 or even £250 more. I did not like to do it from delicacy, and a wish to take only just enough; but I am quite certain he would lend me the money.

Next, the House. We have decided at all events to quit it.<sup>1</sup> Let us look the truth boldly in the face. We gave we will say £1,200 for the house. Well, we can get if we like £60 a year for the bare walls, and sell the furniture so as to realize £75 for every £100. This is losing scarcely anything, especially if we consider it in fact only so much money borrowed on *post-obits*, which in fact is cheaper than ever before. But all this is nothing. Godwin? Well, I am trying what I can do now, and I am not quite hopeless. I forgot about the house to mention the other

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<sup>1</sup> In a letter from Marlow to Mr. W. T. Baxter, Dec. 3, 1817, Mary Shelley says: "This house is very damp; all the books in the library are mildewed. We must quit it. Italy is yet uncertain."

side of the alternative, which is, to let it furnished. This is not so well. My advice is that you should come to town, and soon prepare for departure.

I shall be with you, my beloved, to-morrow evening ; but I *may* not, as I have an appointment with Longdill, which it is *barely possible* should not be.

266. TO A PUBLISHER<sup>1</sup>

13 LISSON GROVE NORTH,  
October 13, 1817.

SIR,

I send you the four first sheets of my poem entitled "Laon and Cythna, or the Revolution of the Golden City."

I believe this commencement affords a sufficient specimen of the work. I am conscious, indeed, that some of the concluding cantos, when "the plot thickens" and human passions are brought into more critical situations of development, are written with more energy and clearness ; and that to see a work of which unity is one of the qualifications aimed at by the author in a disjointed state is, in a certain degree, unfavourable to the general impression. If, however, you submit it to Mr. Moore's judgment, he will make due allowance for these circumstances. The whole poem, with the exception of the first canto and part of the last, is a more human story without the smallest intermixture of supernatural interference. The first canto is indeed in some measure a distinct poem, though very necessary to the wholeness of the work. I say this because if it were all written in the manner of the first canto, I could not expect that it would be interesting

<sup>1</sup> It is not known to whom this letter was addressed, but Prof. Dowden suggests a member of the firm of Longman & Co., who had lately published Moore's "Lalla Rookh." It was written from Leigh Hunt's house.

to any great number of people. I have attempted in the progress of my work to speak to the common elementary emotions of the human heart, so that though it is the story of violence and revolution, it is relieved by milder pictures of friendship and love and natural affections. The scene is supposed to be laid in Constantinople and modern Greece, but without much attempt at minute delineation of Mahometan manners. It is in fact a tale illustrative of such a Revolution as might be supposed to take place in an European nation, acted upon by the opinions of what has been called (erroneously, as I think) the modern philosophy, and contending with antient notions and the supposed advantage derived from them to those who support them. It is a revolution of this kind that is the *beau ideal*, as it were, of the French Revolution, but produced by the influence of individual genius and not out of general knowledge. The authors of it are supposed to be my hero and heroine, whose names appear in the title. My private friends have expressed to me a very high, and therefore I do not doubt, a very erroneous judgment of my work. However, of this I can determine neither way. I have resolved to give it a fair chance, and my wish, therefore, is, first, to know whether you would purchase my interest in the copyright—an arrangement which, if there be any truth in the opinions of my friends Lord Byron and Mr. Leigh Hunt of my powers, cannot be disadvantageous to you; and, in the second place, how far you are willing to be the publisher of it on my own account if such an arrangement, which I should infinitely prefer, cannot be made.

I rely, however, on your having the goodness at least to send the sheets to Mr. Moore, and ask his opinion of their merits.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

267. TO LACKINGTON & Co.  
(London)

ALBION HOUSE, [MARLOW]  
October 28, 1817.

GENTLEMEN,

I thought it necessary just to say that I shall not find it necessary in future to trouble the printer with any considerable alteration such as he will find in the present sheet, and that which immediately preceded it. But the alterations will be found of the last importance to the interest of the tale.<sup>1</sup>

Gentlemen,  
Your obedt. Servt.,  
P. B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed outside],  
Messrs. LACKINGTON & Co.

268. TO CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

19 MABLEDON PLACE, [EUSTON ROAD, LONDON],  
November 12, 1817.

DEAR SIR,

I enclose what I have written of a pamphlet<sup>2</sup> on the subject of our conversation the other evening. I wish it to be sent to press without an hour's delay—I don't think the whole will make a pamphlet larger or so large as my last, but the printer can go on with this and send me a proof and the rest of the MSS. shall be sent before evening.

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein."

<sup>2</sup> "An Address to the People on the Death of the Princess Charlotte. By the Hermit of Marlow." It is stated that the pamphlet was not published and that not more than twenty copies were printed. No copy of the original address is known to have survived, but a reprint, by Thomas Rodd (not later than 1843) with the motto "We pity the Plumage, but forget the Dying Bird" is not uncommon.

If you should have any objections to publish it you can state them as soon as the whole is printed before the title goes to press, though I don't think that you will, as the subject though treated boldly is treated delicately.

Your obedient servant,  
P. B. SHELLEY.

239. TO CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

MARLOW,  
Nov[ember] 25, 1817.

DEAR SIR,

I have not yet seen the announce[ment] of "Laon and Cythna" in the public papers.—Be so good as not to let it be delayed a day longer, as the books are now ready.

I wish a parcel of *twelve* to be sent to me as soon as you can get them put in boards. If you will send me the account of the expense of the advertisements I will transmit you the money the moment they appear. Dear Sir,

Your most obedt.,  
PERCY B. SHELLEY.

Send one of Hunt's *Examiner*<sup>1</sup> the first thing.—Dante ? and the "Spectator" ?

Mr. OLLIER,  
Bookseller,  
3 Welbeck Street,  
London,  
[Postmark, 26 Nov., 1817.]

<sup>1</sup> The *Examiner* for November 30 contained a long extract from "Laon and Cythna": "... a poem just published by Percy Shelley," beginning "I had a little sister whose fair eyes" down to "the enchanted waves that child of glory sung." Shelley may have contributed this quotation, or perhaps he was aware that Hunt intended to print it, and wished to have a copy of the paper as soon as it appeared. Dante and the "Spectator" may have been books that Shelley had ordered.

270. TO WILLIAM GODWIN  
(London)

MARLOW,

December 1, 1817.

MY DEAR GODWIN,

"Mandeville" has arrived this evening—Mary is now reading it; and I am like a man on the brink of a precipice, or a ship whose sails are all to wind for the storm. What do you mean by saying that you shall be in a state of unusual disquiet for the next two weeks? Is it money or literary affairs? I am extremely sorry to hear that Ireson has put you off. I am to the last degree serious and earnest in the affair, and I can place no trust but in Evans. I have written to Longdill as enclosed. My health has suffered somewhat of a relapse since I saw you, attended with pulmonary symptoms. I do not found much hope on physicians; their judgments are all dissimilar, and their prescriptions alike ineffectual. I shall, at all events, quit this damp situation as soon as an opportunity offers and I am strongly impelled to doubt whether Italy might not decide in my frame the contest between disease and youth in favour of life.<sup>1</sup> The precariousness arising out of these considerations makes me earnest that something should be done, and speedily, with Evans. I shall then be free, whatever I ought to do. Until then I consider myself bound to you. Adieu.

Most affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

My best respects to Mrs. Godwin. Does she think of paying us a visit?

Clare bids me say that the enclosed thing is a measure, and that she sends her love to her mother.

To Mr. WILLIAM GODWIN,  
London.

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 565.

271. TO LACKINGTON & Co.  
(London)

MARLOW,  
Dec[ember] 3, 1817.

GENTLEMEN,

Inclosed is a dedication which has been transmitted to me by the author of "Frankenstein,"<sup>1</sup> and which should be printed as is customary immediately subsequent to the Title. How soon do you propose to publish it?

Your very obed. Servant,  
PERCY B. SHELLEY.

To Messrs. LACKINGTON & Co.,  
Finsbury Square,  
London.

272. TO CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

MARLOW,  
Dec[ember] 3, 1817.

DEAR SIR,

That M'Millan<sup>2</sup> is an obstinate old dog, and as loathsome as he is impudent; 'tis a mercy, as the old women say, that I got him through the poem at all.

Let him print the Errata, and say at the top if he likes, that it was all the Author's fault, and that he is as immaculate as the Lamb of God. Only let him do it directly, or if he won't, let someone else.

I forgot to say that "Alastor" might be advertised at the end of the advertisement of this poem. If there should be a demand for a second edition of "Alastor," I should reprint it, with many others in my possession now.

<sup>1</sup> The dedication appeared in the book in the following words "To William Godwin, author of 'Political Justice,' 'Caleb Williams,' etc. These volumes are respectfully inscribed by the author."

<sup>2</sup> The printer of "Laon and Cythna," who produced an edition of 750 copies at Shelley's expense. M'Millan had probably drawn attention to some of these passages in the poem to which Ollier afterwards took objection. See p. 569.



I should be glad to hear any news that is authentic and that won't mask the feeling of the people, public or private, respecting the Poem.

I am tolerably indifferent as to whether it be good or bad.

On the opposite page you will find a thing to print with the errata.

Will you be so obliging as to charge yourself with sending the enclosed advertisement to the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Times*, to be inserted twice in each. I enclose this letter in a parcel to London. Dear Sir,

Your obliged servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

273. TO CHARLES OLLIER

(London)

MARLOW,

Dec[ember] 7, 1817.

DEAR SIR,

Pray be so good as to send me if possible by return of coach, the "Purgatorio" and "Paradiso"<sup>1</sup> of Dante, in English and Italian, by Carey [*sic*] and what other books may be ready, also the "Dionysiaca" of Nonnus. It is likeliest to be found at Priestley's, the classical bookseller.

I am, Sir, your obliged

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

274. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

(London)

MARLOW,

December 7, 1817.

[Friday.]

MY DEAR GODWIN,

To begin with the subject of most immediate interest :

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<sup>1</sup> The translation of Dante, by the Rev. Henry Francis Cary (1772-1844). The "Inferno" was published in 1805, and was followed by the "Purgatorio" and "Paradiso" in 1814.

close with Richardson ; and when I say this, what relief should I not feel from a thousand distressing emotions, if I could believe that he was in earnest in his offer ! I have not heard from Longdill, though I wish earnestly for information.

My health has been materially worse. My feelings at intervals are of a deadly and torpid kind, or awakened to a state of such unnatural and keen excitement, that, only to instance the organ of sight, I find the very blades of grass and the boughs of distant trees present themselves to me with microscopical distinctness. Towards evening, I sink into a state of lethargy and inanimation, and often remain for hours on the sofa, between sleep and waking, a prey to the most painful irritability of thought. Such, with little intermission, is my condition. The hours devoted to study are selected with vigilant caution from among these periods of endurance. It is not for this that I think of travelling to Italy, even if I knew that Italy would relieve me. But I have experienced a decisive pulmonary attack ; and, although at present it has passed away without any very considerable vestige of its existence, yet this symptom sufficiently shows the true nature of my disease to be consumption. It is to my advantage that this malady is in its nature slow, and, if one is sufficiently alive to its advances, is susceptible of cure from a warm climate. In the event of its assuming any decided shape, it would be my *duty* to go to Italy without delay ; and it is only when that measure becomes an indispensable duty that, contrary to both Mary's feelings and to mine, as they regard you, I shall go to Italy. I need not remind you (besides the mere pain endured by the survivors) of the train of evil consequences which my death would cause to ensue. I am thus circumstantial and explicit, because you seem to have misunderstood me. It is not health, but life, that I should seek in Italy ; and that, not for my own sake—I feel that I am capable of trampling on all such weakness—but for the sake of those to whom my life may

be a source of happiness, utility, security, and honour, and to some of whom my death might be all that is the reverse.

I ought to say I cannot persevere in the meat diet. What you say of Malthus fills me, as far as my intellect is concerned, with life and strength. I believe that I have a most anxious desire that the time should quickly come that, even so far as you are personally concerned, you should be tranquil and independent. But when I consider the intellectual lustre with which you clothe this world, and how much the last generation of mankind may be benefited by that light flowing forth without the intervention of one shadow, I am elevated above all thoughts which tend to you or myself as an individual, and become, by sympathy, part of those distant and innumerable minds to whom your writings must be present.

I meant to have written to you about "Mandeville"<sup>1</sup> solely; but I was so irritable and weak that I could not write, although I thought I had much to say. I have read "Mandeville," but I must read it again soon, for the interest is of that irresistible and overwhelming kind, that the mind in its influence is like a cloud borne on by an impetuous wind—like one breathlessly carried forward, who has no time to pause or observe the causes of his career. I think the power of "Mandeville" is inferior to nothing you have done; and, were it not for the character of Falkland,<sup>2</sup> no instance in which you have exerted that power of *creation* which you possess beyond all contemporary writers, might compare with it. Falkland is still alone; power is, in Falkland, not, as in "Mandeville," tumult hurried on by the tempest, but tranquillity standing

<sup>1</sup> Shelley's critique of Godwin's "Mandeville," which had been recently published, appeared in the form of a letter, in the last number of the *Examiner* for 1817 with the initials E. K., that is, Elizabeth Knight, Mary's familiar name for Shelley.

<sup>2</sup> Godwin's novel, "Caleb Williams."

unshaken amid its fiercest rage. But "Caleb Williams" never shakes the deepest soul like "Mandeville." It must be said of the latter, you rule with a rod of iron. The picture is never bright; and we wonder whence you drew the darkness with which its shades are deepened, until the epithet of tenfold might almost cease to be a metaphor. The *noun smorfia*<sup>1</sup> touches some cord within us with such a cold and jarring power, that I started, and for some time could scarce believe but that I was Mandeville, and that this hideous grin was stamped upon my own face. In style and strength of expression, "Mandeville" is wonderfully great, and the energy and the sweetness of the sentiments scarcely to be equalled. Clifford's character, as mere beauty, is a divine and soothing contrast; and I do not think—if, perhaps, I except (and I know not if I ought to do so) the speech of Agathon in the *Symposium* of Plato—that there ever was produced a moral discourse more characteristic of all that is admirable and lovely in human nature—more lovely and admirable in itself—than that of Henrietta to Mandeville, as he is recovering from madness. Shall I say that, when I discovered that she was pleading all this time sweetly for her lover, and when at last she weakly abandoned poor Mandeville, I felt an involuntary and, perhaps, an unreasonable pang? Adieu!

Always most affectionately yours,  
P. S.

To  
Mr. WILLIAM GODWIN,  
London.

275, TO WILLIAM THOMAS BAXTER

MARLOW,  
Dec[ember] 10, 1817.

MY DEAR SIR,

We have neither heard from you announcing any

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<sup>1</sup> Italian for "grimace."

intelligence of your own family, or, what is of far less consequence, the receipt of my cheque for £7.<sup>1</sup>

We heard at once of Mr. Booth's illness and recovery,<sup>2</sup> and I hope he is so far recovered and so much at leisure as to make it no compliment to say that we wish you would visit us here once more. Mary desires me to give you her kindest remembrances, and to ask if you have heard from Isabel and the others in the North and how they are.

Most truly yours,  
P. B. SHELLEY.

<sup>1</sup> This amount was in payment for some blankets (such as were supplied to the British officers while serving in the Peninsula) that Shelley had asked Baxter to obtain for him from Scotland, for distribution to the poor at Marlow. Mrs. Shelley says that while visiting the poor in the winter of 1817-18 he sustained a severe attack of ophthalmia.

<sup>2</sup> David Booth, a brewer of Newburg, Fifeshire, was a man of advanced political and religious opinions, and a friend of William Godwin, to whom he introduced his friend William Thomas Baxter, a Dundee merchant, when he visited London in 1809. Baxter, who had five daughters of his own, invited Mary Godwin to Scotland, where she arrived in June, 1812, and she stayed there some months. Isabel Baxter, the youngest of the family, became a close friend of Mary, with whom she corresponded on her return to London until July, 1814, when, after another visit to Scotland, Mary eloped with Shelley. In the meantime David Booth married Isabel Baxter, who was twenty-nine years his junior, and insisted that the correspondence between his wife and Mary should cease. In 1817, after Shelley's marriage with Mary, the correspondence was renewed, and in the autumn of that year Mr. Booth and Mr. Baxter came to London. During September Baxter visited Marlow and was most favourably impressed by Shelley. Mr. Booth, however, declined to meet the poet, and when he heard that his wife had been invited to accompany the Shelleys on their proposed visit to the Continent, he insisted that her correspondence with Mary (which had been resumed without his knowledge) should be discontinued. On Dec. 3 Mrs. Shelley had addressed a chatty letter (mentioning the cheque) to Mr. Baxter, asking why Mrs. Booth had not written to her. As Baxter did not reply, Shelley wrote him the above letter. An account of Shelley's association with the Baxter family, from which the particulars in this note are derived, was contributed by Miss Isobel Stuart to the *Star* in Feb. and March, 1894. Shelley's two letters are here reprinted from these articles by kind permission of the editor of that newspaper.

276. TO CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

MARLOW,

December 11, 1817.

DEAR SIR,

It is to be regretted that you did not consult your own safety and advantage (if you consider it connected with the non-publication of my book)<sup>1</sup> before your declining the publication, after having accepted it, would have

<sup>1</sup> "Laon and Cythna." Peacock says: "In this poem he [Shelley] had carried the expression of his opinions, moral, political and theological, beyond the bounds of discretion. The terror which, in those days of persecution of the press, the perusal of the book inspired in Mr. Ollier, the publisher, induced him to solicit the alteration of many passages which he had marked. Shelley was for some time inflexible; but Mr. Ollier's refusal to publish the poem as it was, backed by the advice of all his friends, induced him to submit to the required changes. Many leaves were cancelled, and it was finally published as "The Revolt of Islam; / a Poem, / In twelve cantos. / By / Percy Bysshe Shelley. / London; / Printed for C. and J. Ollier, 3 Welbeck-Street; / By B. M'Millan, Bow-Street, Covent Garden." / Of "Laon and Cythna" "only three copies had gone forth. One of these had found its way to the *Quarterly Review*, and the opportunity was readily seized of pouring out on it one of the most malignant effusions of the *odium theologicum* that ever appeared even in those days, and in that periodical." Peacock adds that when Ollier positively refused to publish the poem as it was "Shelley had no hope of another publisher. He for a long time refused to alter a line: but his friends finally prevailed on him to submit. Still he could not, or would not, sit down by himself to alter it, and the whole of the alterations were actually made in successive sittings of what I may call a literary committee. He contested the proposed alterations step by step: in the end, sometimes adopting, more frequently modifying, never originating, and always insisting that his poem was spoiled." (*Fraser's Magazine*, Jan., 1860, March, 1862.) It would appear that the alterations were practically made on Dec. 15 when Ollier was at Marlow (see p. 575). Shelley, however, may have discussed the subject previously with Peacock, who was probably at Shelley's house when the alterations were actually made.

operated to so extensive and serious an injury to my views as now. The instances of abuse and menace which you cite were such as you expected, and were, as I conceived, prepared for. If not, it would have been just to me to have given them their due weight and consideration before. You foresaw, you foreknew, all that these people would say. You do your best to condemn my book before it is given forth, because you publish it, and then withdraw ; so that no other bookseller will publish it, because one has already rejected it. You must be aware of the great injury which you prepare for me. If I had never consulted your advantage, my book would have had a fair hearing. But now it is first published, and then the publisher, as if the author had deceived him as to the contents of the work—and as if the inevitable consequence of its publication would be ignominy and punishment—and as if none should dare to touch it or look at it—retracts, at a period when nothing but the most extraordinary and unforeseen circumstances can justify the retraction.

I beseech you to reconsider the matter, for your sake no less than for my own. Assume the high and secure ground of courage. The people who visit your shop, and the wretched bigot who gave his worthless custom to some other bookseller, are not the public. The public respect talent ; and a large portion of them are already undeceived with regard to the prejudices which my book attacks. You would lose some customers, but you would gain others. Your trade would be diverted into a channel more consistent with your own principles. Not to say that a publisher is in no wise pledged to all the opinions of his publications, or to any ; and that he may enter his protest with each copy sold, either against the truth or the discretion of the principles of the books he sells. But there is a much more important consideration in the case. You are, and have been to a certain extent, the publisher. I don't believe that, if the book was quietly and regularly published, the Government would touch anything of a

character so refined, and so remote from the conceptions of the vulgar. They would hesitate before they invaded a member of the higher circles of the republic of letters. But, if they see us tremble, they will make no distinctions ; they will feel their strength. You might bring the arm of the law down upon us by flinching now. Directly these scoundrels see that people are afraid of them, they seize upon them and hold them up to mankind as criminals already convicted by their own fears. You lay yourself prostrate, and they trample on you. How glad they would be to seize on any connection of Hunt's by this most powerful of all their arms—the terrors and self-condemnation of their victim. Read all the *ex officio* cases, and see what reward booksellers and printers have received for their submission.

If, contrary to common sense and justice, you resolve to give me up, you shall receive no detriment from a connection with me in small matters, though you determine to inflict so serious a one on me in great. You shall not be at a farthing's expense. I shall still, so far as my powers extend, do my best to promote your interest. On the contrary supposition, even admitting you derive no benefit from the book itself—and it should be my care that you shall do so—I hold myself ready to make ample indemnity for any loss you may sustain.

There is one compromise you might make, though that would be still injurious to me. Sherwood and Neely wished to be the principal publishers. Call on them, and say that it was through a mistake that you undertook the principal direction of the book, as it was *my wish* that it should be theirs, and that I have written to you to that effect. This, if it would be advantageous to you, would be detrimental to, but not utterly destructive of, my views. To withdraw your name entirely, would be to inflict on me a bitter and undeserved injury.

Let me hear from you by return of post. I hope that you will be influenced to fulfil your engagement with me,



and proceed with the publication, as justice to me, and, indeed, a well-understood estimate of your own interest and character, demand. I do hope that you will have too much regard to the well-chosen motto of your seal<sup>1</sup> to permit the murmurs of a few bigots to outweigh the serious and permanent considerations presented in this letter. To their remonstrances you have only to reply, "I did not write the book; I am not responsible; here is the author's address—state your objections to him. I do no more than sell it to those who inquire for it; and, if they are not pleased with their bargain, the author empowers me to receive the book and to return the money." As to the interference of Government, nothing is more improbable [than] that in any case it would be attempted; but, if it should, it would be owing entirely to your perseverance in the groundless apprehensions which dictated your communication received this day, and conscious terror would be perverted into an argument of guilt.

I have just received a most kind and encouraging letter from Mr. Moore on the subject of my poem. I have the fairest chance of the public approaching my work with unbiassed and unpervverted feeling: the fruit of reputation (and you know for *what purposes* I value it) is within my reach. It is for you, now you have been once named as publisher, and have me in your power, to blast all this, and to hold up my literary character in the eye of mankind as that of a proscribed and rejected outcast. And for no evil that I have ever done you, but in return for a preference which, although you falsely now esteem injurious to you, was solicited by Hunt, and conferred by me, as a source and a proof of nothing but kind intentions.

Dear Sir,

I remain your sincere well-wisher,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

<sup>1</sup> "In omnibus libertas."

277. TO WILLIAM GODWIN  
(London)

GREAT MARLOW,

December 11, 1817.

MY DEAR GODWIN,

If I had believed it possible you should send any part of my letter to the *Chronicle* I should have expressed more fully my sentiments of "Mandeville" and of the author ; as it is, I cannot but be glad that you should think any opinion of mine relating to your book worthy of being presented to the public. The effect of your favourable consideration of my powers, as they relate to the judgement of the degree and kind of approbation due to the intellectual exertions of others, has emboldened me to write not a volume, but a more copious statement of my feelings as they were excited by "Mandeville." This I have sent to the *Examiner*. If Hunt does not insert it, I will send it to you for your own reading, though it was so written as to be more interesting to the public than to yourself. I have read and considered all that you say about my general powers, and the particular instance of the poem in which I have attempted to develop them. Nothing can be more satisfactory to me than the interest which your admonitions express. But I think you are mistaken in some points with regard to the peculiar nature of my powers, whatever be their amount. I listened with deference and self-suspicion to your censures of "Laon and Cythna ;" but the productions of mine which you commend hold a very low place in my own esteem, and this reassured me, in some degree at least. The poem was produced by a series of thoughts which filled my mind with unbounded and sustained enthusiasm. I felt the precariousness of my life, and I resolved in this book to leave some records of myself. Much of what the volume contains was written with the same feeling, as real, though not so prophetic, as the communications of a dying man. I never presumed, indeed, to consider it anything approaching to faultless ; but, when I considered contemporary

productions of the same apparent pretensions, I will own that I was filled with confidence. I felt that it was in many respects a genuine picture of my own mind. I felt that the sentiments were true, not assumed: and in this have I long believed that my power consists in sympathy—and that part of imagination which relates to sentiment and contemplation. I am formed, if for anything not in common with the herd of mankind, to apprehend minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us, and to communicate the conceptions which result from considering either the moral or the material universe as a whole. Of course I believe these faculties, which perhaps comprehend all that is sublime in man, to exist very imperfectly in my own mind. But when you advert to my chancery paper, a cold, forced, unimpassioned, insignificant piece of cramped and cautious argument; and to the little scrap about "Mandeville," which expressed my feelings indeed, but cost scarcely two minutes' thought to express, as specimens of my powers, more favourable than that which grew as it were from "the agony and bloody sweat" of intellectual travail; surely I must feel that in some manner I am mistaken in believing that I have any talent at all, or you in the selection of the specimens of it. Yet, after all, I cannot but be conscious, in much of what I write, of an absence of that tranquillity which is the attribute and accompaniment of power. This feeling alone would make your most kind and wise admonitions, on the subject of the economy of intellectual force, valuable to me. And, if I live, or if I see any trust in coming years, doubt not but that I shall do something, whatever it might be, which a serious and earnest estimate of my powers will suggest to me, and which will be in every respect accommodated to their utmost limits.

This dry and frosty weather fills me with health and spirits; I wish I could believe that it would last: Shall we now see you soon? Why could you not for a day or two

at least leave town? Mrs. Godwin, too; how is she? and does she not mean to take embargo off her own person? Mary unites with me in best love.

My dear Godwin,

Most affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

To

MR. WILLIAM GODWIN,  
London.

278. TO CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

MARLOW,

December 13, 1817.

DEAR SIR,

The contents of your letter this morning certainly alters the question.<sup>1</sup> No one is to be blamed, however heavy and unexpected is my disappointment. It is of the greatest importance that we should meet immediately, and, if the state of my health would have permitted I should have come to Town immediately on the receipt of your letter. As it is, I send my servant (that no delay or mistake may take place) with this note.

I need not say that I should be happy to see you if you could contrive to spend a few days with us. But my present letter is written under the persuasion that you could spare no day [letter torn ? so or as] conveniently as Sunday, and in a strong feeling of the *necessity of instant communication with you*.

The mails which pass within a short distance of my house leave Piccadilly at eight o'clock, and you will find a friendly welcome and a warm fire at the end of your journey.

I ought to say that I have received no parcel from you.

Your very obliged ser[van]t,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

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<sup>1</sup> In regard to altering certain passages in "Laon and Cythna," Mary states in her journal that Ollier came down to Marlow on Sunday, Dec. 14; on Dec. 15 the alterations were made in the poem, and finished on the following day, when Ollier returned to London.

## 279. TO THOMAS MOORE

(Devizes)

ALBION HOUSE, MARLOW,

December 16, 1817.

DEAR SIR,

The present edition of "Laon and Cythna" is to be suppressed, and it will be republished in about a fortnight under the title of "The Revolt of Islam," with some alterations which consist in little else than the substitution of the words *friend* or<sup>1</sup> *lover* for that of *brother* and *sister*. The truth is, that the seclusion of my habits has confined me so much within the circle of my own thoughts, that I have formed to myself a very different measure of approbation or disapprobation for actions than that which is in use among mankind; and the result of that peculiarity, contrary to my intention, revolts and shocks many who might be inclined to sympathise with me in my general views.—As soon as I discovered that this effect was produced by the circumstance alluded to, I hastened to cancel it—not from any personal feeling of terror, or repentance, but from the sincere desire of doing all the good and conferring all the pleasure which might flow from so obscure a person as myself. I don't know why I trouble you with these words, but your kind approbation of the opening of the Poem has emboldened me to believe that the account of my motives might interest you.

The little volume<sup>2</sup> which you have been quicksighted enough to attribute to its real authors is composed of two letters written by me signed S., and some other letters and the Journal signed M., written by Mrs. Shelley. I ought to say that the Journal was written some years ago—the style of it is almost infantine, and it was published in the idea that the Author would never be recognized.—The letters from Geneva were written in the summer of 1816, and the voyage round the lake, described in one of them

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<sup>1</sup> Originally written " &."

<sup>2</sup> "History of a Six Weeks' Tour, &c," London, 1817.

was made in the society of Lord Byron, and its memory derives from that circumstance the light of an enchantment which can never be dissolved. I mention this because *you* were often the theme of our conversations, from which I learned that you were intimate with him. I ought to say that Mrs. Shelley, tho' sorry that her secret is discovered, is exceedingly delighted to hear that you have derived any amusement from our book. Let me say in her defence that the Journal of the Six Weeks' Tour was written before she was seventeen, and that she has another literary secret which I will in a short time ask you to *keep* in return for having *discovered* this.

What right have I to have written all this to you?

Dear Sir. Y[ours]<sup>1</sup> very obliged  
and sin[cere]ly,

PER[CY B. SHELLEY].

[Addressed outside].

[THOMAS] MOORE, Esq.,  
Sloperton Cottage,  
Devizes, Wilts.

(Endorsed by another hand, "Mr. SHELLEY".)

230. TO CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

MARLOW,

MONDAY NIGHT. [Probably December 22, 1817.]

DEAR SIR,

I cannot but say that I am extremely desirous that all the copies that have been given forth should, if possible, be returned. If it is *not* possible, I cannot help it.

Do just as you like about Mr. Barton.

I wish, on publication, copies to be sent to all the principal Reviews.

Your obliged sert.,

PERCY B. S.

MR. OLLIER,

<sup>1</sup> The letter is torn: I have supplied the words in brackets.  
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281. TO CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

MARLOW,

December 27, 1817.

DEAR SIR,

I am surprised that I have not received the remainder of the proofs of the Poem.<sup>1</sup> I wish them to be sent immediately; and as soon after as possible perfect copies of the book. I have succeeded in procuring the return of two of the copies from Ebers's.<sup>2</sup> Have you been equally fortunate in the application of request you made to the other purchasers?

It ought to be *now advertised* as to be published January 10th.

Dear Sir, your obliged servant,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed outside].

Mr. CHAS. OLLIER,  
73 Welbeck St.,  
London.

282. TO WILLIAM THOMAS BAXTER

MARLOW,

December 30, 1817.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your candid explanation is very welcome to me,<sup>3</sup> as it relieves me from a weight of uncertainty, and is consistent

<sup>1</sup> Presumably the cancelled sheets for "The Revolt of Islam."

<sup>2</sup> Ebers's British and Foreign Circulating Library, 27 Old Bond Street.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Booth had influenced his father-in-law (who was his junior by ten years) to break off all relations with Shelley, and Baxter had hoped to do so by leaving his letters unanswered. But on Dec. 25 Shelley wrote again; his letter has not been preserved, but he appears to have complained that Baxter had changed in his manner and not only declined to visit him, but did not think his invitations worth the formality of a refusal. Baxter in his reply of Dec. 29 repudiated the charge of having changed in his manner, and though oppressed with a sense of Shelley's kindness and attention, he

with my own mode of treating those who honour me with their friendship—which is, either to maintain with them a free and unsuspecting intercourse, or explicitly to state to them my motives for interrupting or circumscribing it, as soon as they arise within my own mind.

I understand by your letter that you decline, in the name of your family, an intercourse which I believe had its sole foundation in the intimacy of Isabel and Mary. This intercourse entirely originated in an unsolicited advance

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excused himself for not visiting Marlow on account of business. He added: "The station your rank and fortune gives you in society, the sphere which it entitled you to move in, are such as I cannot in good conscience introduce my family into, as it could only tend to give them notions and habits of life wholly unsuited to my circumstances, and the humility of their expectations. This independence of fortune, too, has given you a freedom of thought and action entirely inconsistent with the customs, manners, and prejudices of European society with which I have been at pains to imbue their minds, and which I wish not to see eradicated. On all these accounts, although I had not been withheld by business, I should have found myself called on to refrain from visiting you, and to allow that such intimacy to gradually die away, which had nothing in common between us to support it." On receiving the above letter of Dec. 30, Baxter showed it to Mr. Booth, who wrote to Shelley on Jan. 2, 1819: "You have amused yourself in sketching the characters of Mr. Baxter and me. They are composite pictures, and, as a pair of portraits, form together a ludicrous mystical divinity, combining the abstract principles of good and evil, of divinity and demon. With Mr. Baxter you are perhaps entitled to use such freedom, but I apprehend that you have had too little intimacy with me to authorise you to become my calumniator. I have never been yours. I have never accused you of an opinion or of an action which I have not seen avowed and vindicated by your name. I know you only as a stranger. I have never sought your friendship or your correspondence, I have therefore violated no presumptive compact in declining either." After referring to Mary's elopement with Shelley, and her estrangement from her father and Mrs. Booth, and to the renewal of her correspondence with his wife at Godwin's request, he concludes by saying that Baxter's last letter was sent off without him seeing it, and that he "certainly should not have suggested any expression which could have called forth remarks about rank or station. In these I never would acknowledge inferiority." On March 2, before Shelley left England, he took leave of Mr. Baxter; but Mrs. Booth, although in town, neither called nor communicated with Mary Shelley.



on their part; a change in their opinions and feelings produced it then, and now concludes it. Mary renewed with pleasure the friendship of her early years. I considered her friends as mine, and found much satisfaction, distinct from that duty, in discovering in you, the first of the new circle to whom I was introduced, a man of virtue and talent with whose feelings and opinions I perpetually found occasions of sympathy. To me, a secluded valetudinarian, all this was quite an event. Mary for three whole years had been lamenting the loss of her friend, and was made miserable and indignant that her friendship had been sacrificed to opinions which she supposed had already received their condemnation in the mind of every enlightened reasoner on moral science. Young and ardent spirits confound theory and practice. I saw that all this was in the natural order of things, and it is neither my habit to feel indignation or disappointment at the inconsistencies of mankind. People who had one atom of pride or resentment for injury or neglect would have refused the renewal of an intimacy which had already been once dissolved on a plea, in their conception, to the last degree unworthy and erroneous.

I thus see your determination to deprive Mary of the intercourse of her friend, and most highly respect the motives, as I know they must exist in your mind, for this proceeding. May I ask *precisely what* those motives are? You do not distinctly say, but only allude to certain free opinions which I hold, inconsistent with yours. We had a good deal of discussion about all sorts of opinions, and I thought we agreed on all—except matters of taste; and I don't think any serious consequences ought to flow from a controversy whether Wordsworth or Campbell be the greater poet. Yet I would not be misapprehended. Though I have not a spark of pride or resentment in this matter, I disdain to say a word that should tend to *persuade* you to change your decision. On any such change you know where to find a man constant and sincere in his

predilections. But all I now want is to know the plain truth.

Mr. Booth is no doubt a man of great intellectual acuteness and consummate skill in the exercise of logic. I never met a man by whom, in the short time we exchanged ideas, I felt myself excited to so much severe and sustained mental competition, or from whom I derived so much amusement and instruction. It would have given me much pleasure to have cultivated his acquaintance. But I know that this desire could not be reciprocal. Nor is it difficult to apprehend the cause of this distinction. Am I not right in my conjecture in attributing to Mr. Booth the change in your sentiment announced in your letter? His keen and subtle mind, deficient in those elementary feelings which are the *principles* of all moral reasoning, is better fitted for the detection of error than the establishment of truth, and his pleadings, urged or withdrawn with sceptical caution and indifference, may be employed with almost equal force as an instrument of fair argument or sophistry. In matters of abstract speculation we can readily recur to the first principles on which our opinions rest, and thus confute a sophism or derive instruction from an argument. But in the complicated relations of private life, it is a practice difficult, dangerous, and rare to appeal to an elementary principle; the motives of the sophist are many and secret; the resources of his ingenuity as numerous as the relations respecting which it is exercised. Mr. Booth's reasonings *may* be right; they *may* be sincere; he *may* be conscientiously impressed with views widely differing from mine. But be frank with me, my dear sir, is it not Mr. Booth who has persuaded you to see things in this way since your last visit, when no such considerations as you allege in your letter were present to your thoughts? The only motive that suggests this question is an unwillingness to submit to the having my intimacies made the sport of secret and unacknowledged manœuvres.

I need not say that your expressions of kindness and

service are flattering to me, and that I can say with great truth that I should consider myself honoured if at any time it were possible that you should make the limited power which I possess a source of utility to you.

My dear Sir,

Yours most sincerely,

P. B. SHELLEY.

(P.S. *added by Mary Shelley.*)

MY DEAR SIR,

You see I prophesied well three months ago, when you were here. I then said that I was sure that Mr. Booth was averse to our intercourse, and would find some means to break it off. I wish I had you by the fire here in my little study, and it might be "double, double, toil and trouble," but I could quickly convince you that your girls are not below me in station, and that in fact I am the fittest companion for them in the world; but I postpone the argument until I see you, for I know (pardon me) that *viva voce* is all in all with you.

283. TO CHARLES OLLIER

(London)

MARLOW,

Jan[uary] 11, 1818.

DEAR SIR,

I ought to have received copies of the "Revolt of Islam"—send six—be sure. Pray send them instantly, as I ought to have exchanged the other for them long ago. Keep it well *advertised*, and write for money directly the other is gone—"Alastor" may be adv[ertised] *with it*.

I enclose this note by the Coach.

Your obedient servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

Mr. CHARLES OLLIER,

Bookseller,

3 Welbeck St.,

Cavendish Square.

234. TO CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

MARLOW,

Jan[uary] 15, 1818.

DEAR SIR,

Pray send me the copies of my Poem which I requested *immediately* or write and assign some reason for their detention. On second thoughts I wish ten, not six to be sent. I should have written before, but that I have expected their arrival every night by the coach.

Inclosed is ten pounds--which be so good as to say that you have received safe--that no delay may take place in vigorously advertising. I think I said that I wish under the new circumstances that a copy should be sent to each of the Reviews.

Your obedient servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

Do you hear anything said of "Frankenstein" ?

Mr. CHARLES OLLIER,  
Bookseller,  
3 Welbeck Street,  
Cavendish Sq.,  
London.

285. TO CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

[MARLOW,]

Jan[uary] 16, 1818.

DEAR SIR,

Enclosed is a check for (within a few shillings) the amount of your bill. Can't you *make* the Booksellers subscribe more of the Poem ?

Your most obedient servt.,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

286. TO CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

MARLOW,

January 22, 1818.

DEAR SIR,

I write now simply to request you to send me Chapman's "Hymns," as they have been published by Triphook, together with any of the numbers of the Collection of Poetry which he is printing. Pray send them immediately without waiting for the other books. I mean *if possible* by to-morrow's coach.

*Munday*, an Oxford bookseller, happened to call on me and I requested him to send for some copies of the Poem, and advertise it in the Oxford Papers. He will probably use my name with you for that purpose.

Don't relax in the advertising. I suppose that at present that it scarcely sells at all. If you see any reviews or notices of it in any periodical paper pray send it me—it is part of my reward—the amusement of hearing the abuse of the bigots.

Dear Sir, your very obliged servant,  
PERCY B. SHELLEY.

Mr. CHAS. OLLIER,  
Bookseller,  
3 Welbeck St.,  
London.

287. TO CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

MARLOW,

Jan[uary] 22, 1818.

DEAR SIR,

I take the opportunity of a parcel to town to say that I have no objections—or rather that it is my wish that a copy of the "Revolt of Islam" should be sent to Valpy.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Probably John Abraham Valpy (1787-1854), the editor and printer.

Pray send me Hunt's new poems<sup>1</sup> as soon as they appear, as well as "Altham."<sup>2</sup>

Dear Sir, your faithful servant,

P. B. SHELLEY.

Will the books ever be bound ?

MR. CHAS. OLLIER,  
3 Welbeck St.,  
Cavendish Square.

288. TO CHARLES OLLIER<sup>3</sup>  
(London)

MARLOW,<sup>4</sup>

Jan[uary] 25, 1818.

DEAR SIR,

Be so good as to send copies of the Poem with my compliments to Mr. Cof[ul]son and Sir James Mackintosh. Do

<sup>1</sup> Leigh Hunt's volume "Foliage; or Poems, Original and Translated," was published early in 1818, by C. & J. Ollier. See Shelley's letter to Hunt, March 22, 1818.

<sup>2</sup> "Altham and his Wife; a Domestic Tale," by Charles Ollier, was issued this year, also by C. and J. Ollier.

<sup>3</sup> This letter is in the writing of Mrs. Shelley.

<sup>4</sup> Miss Clairmont notes in her journal that the house at Marlow was sold on this day. From the extracts in Mary Shelley's journal printed by Prof. Dowden ("Life of Shelley," Vol. II, pp. 183-4) it appears that Shelley left Marlow for London on February 7th, Clare followed with Willy and Allegra on the 9th; Mary departed on the following day. Shelley's last days in England were spent in the pleasant society of Hunt, Hogg, Peacock and Horace Smith. He lodged at Great Russell Street, Covent Garden: in the same street where the Lambs were then living. Mary Lamb was a visitor. He also saw Keats, Novello, Baxter, and Godwin; and he went to the theatre and opera. Peacock says: "I saw him for the last time on Tuesday, the 10th of March. The evening was a remarkable one, as being that of the first performance of an opera of Rossini in England, and of the first appearance here of Malibran's father, Garcia. He performed *Count Almaviva* in the "*Barbiere di Siviglia*"; Fodor was *Rosina*; Naldi, *Figaro*; Ambrogetti, *Bartolo*; and Angrisani, *Basilio*. I supped with Shelley and his travelling companions after the opera. They departed early the next morning."

Two days before leaving England, on March 9, Mary writes in her journal "Christening the children." The register at St. Giles in

you think you could get for me for copies some original drawings in Indian ink, etc. ? There are such things to be had, I know, but I do not know exactly where.

You ought to continue to advertise the poem vigorously.  
Shall be glad to receive the bound books.

Your obedient sert.,

Last No. of the *Quarterly*.

P. B. SHELLEY.

Mr. CHARLES OLLIER,  
3 Welbeck St.,  
Cavendish Square,  
London.

289. To BROOKES & Co.  
(London)

DOVER,

March 12, 1818.

GENTLEMEN,

In my absence I wish no other bill to be honoured but the following :

Mr. Peacock	..	£30—15 days.
Mr. Godwin	..	150—one month.
Mr. Ollier	..	30— Do.
Mr. Madocks		

(for accounts at Marlow) 117—four months.

Should any other be presented for payment, I request that payment be refused, as they depend upon Conditional engagements with friends in England who ought to be prepared to meet them.

Gentlemen, I have the honour to be,

Your most obed. Sert.,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

the Fields records the baptism of William, and Clara Everina, children of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Esq., and Mary Wollstonecraft, his wife, of Great Marlow, co. Bucks (late of Great Russell Street) ; the first born Jan. 24, 1816, the second Sept. 2, 1817 ; also Clara Allegra, reputed daughter of Rt. Hon. George Gordon, Lord Byron, Peer, of no fixed residence, travelling on the Continent, by Clara Mary Jané Clairmont, born Jan. 17, 1817. The officiating clergyman was Charles Macarthy.

### XIII. EARLY ITALIAN IMPRESSIONS

#### "ROSALIND AND HELEN"

March 13—November 9, 1818

THE Journey to Italy—Leigh Hunt's Poems—Passage of the Echelles—Italian Women—Lake Como—Milan Cathedral—Leghorn—The Gisbornes—The Baths of Lucca—Bathing—Godwin's "Malthus"—"Rosalind and Helen"—Florence—Venice—The Hoppners—Byron—Clare and Allegra—I Cappuccini—Death of Clara Shelley—"Prometheus Unbound"—Journey to Naples—Ariosto and Tasso—Pictures at Bologna.

#### 200. TO LEIGH HUNT

(London)

CALAIS,

March 13, 1818.

[Friday.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

After a stormy but very short voyage we have arrived at Calais, and are at this moment on the point of proceeding. We are all very well, and in excellent spirits. Motion has always this effect upon the blood, even when the mind knows that there are causes for dejection.

With respect to Taylor and Hessey (*sic*)<sup>1</sup> I am ready to certify, if necessary in a Court of Justice, that one of them said he would give up his (*qy. their*) copyright for the £20; and that in lieu of that he would accept the profits of "Rimini" until it was paid.

Yours ever affectionately,

P. B. SHELLEY.

Pray write to Milan.

<sup>1</sup> "Taylor and Hessey" was a firm of London publishers.



*Written by Mary Shelley*

Shelley is full of business, and desires me to finish this hasty notice of our safety. The children are in high spirits and very well. Our passage was stormy but very short. Both Alba and William were sick, but they were very good and slept all the time. We now depart for Italy, with very fine weather and good hopes.

Farewell, my dear Friend, may you be happy,  
Your affectionate friend,

MARY W. S.

[Addressed outside],

Mr. LEIGH HUNT,  
13 Lisson Grove North,  
Paddington, London,  
Angleterre.

## 291. TO LEIGH HUNT

LYONS,<sup>1</sup>

March 22, 1818.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Why did you not wake me that night before we left England, you and Marianne?<sup>2</sup> I take this as rather an unkind piece of kindness in you; but which, in consideration of the six hundred miles between us, I forgive.

<sup>1</sup> Mary Shelley's journal tells us that they arrived at Calais on March 12, and departed on the following day, and travelled through Douay, La Fere, Rheims, Dizier, Langres, Dijon, Macon, and reached Lyons on Saturday, the 21st, at half-past eleven. The following day Shelley wrote to Byron, "who had refused to correspond with Clare, informing him that Allegra had come thus far on the way." (Dowden's "Shelley," II, p. 108.) On the 25th they left Lyons.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley's last day in London, Tuesday, March 10, 1818, was spent at his lodgings in Great Russell Street, in the company of Leigh Hunt and his wife. Mary adds in her journal: "Mary Lamb calls, Papa in the evening; our adieus." During the evening Shelley fell into a sleep from which he was not awakened, and his friends departed without taking leave of him.

We have journeyed towards the spring, that has been hastening to meet us from the south; and though our weather was at first abominable, we have now warm sunny days, and soft winds, and a sky of deep azure, the most serene I ever saw. The heat in this city to-day is like that of London in the midst of summer. My spirits and health sympathize in the change. Indeed, before I left London, my spirits were as feeble as my health, and I had demands on them which I found it difficult to supply.

I have read "Foliage:"<sup>1</sup> with most of the poems I am already familiar. What a delightful poem "The Nymphs" is! especially the second part. It is truly *poetical*, in the intense and emphatic sense of the word. If six hundred miles were not between us, I should say what a pity that *glib*<sup>2</sup> was not omitted, and that the poem is not as faultless as it is beautiful. But, for fear I should *spoil* your next poem I will not let slip a word upon the subject.

Give my love to Marianne and her sister, and tell Marianne she defrauded me of a kiss by not waking me when she went away, and that, as I have no better mode of conveying it, I must take the best, and ask you to pay the debt. When shall I see you again? Oh, that it might be in Italy! I confess that the thought of how long we may be divided makes me very melancholy. Adieu, my dear friend. Write soon.

Ever most affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

To LEIGH HUNT, Esq.

## 292. JOURNAL: PASSAGE OF THE ECHELLES

Thursday, March 26, [1818].

We travel towards the mountains, and begin to enter the

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<sup>1</sup> "Foliage; or, Poems Original and Translated. By Leigh Hunt. Published by Ollier in 1818. The volume contains a poem "To Percy Shelley."

<sup>2</sup> In the phrase, "the glib sea-flowers."

valleys of the Alps. The country becomes covered again with verdure and cultivation, and white chateaux and scattered cottages among woods of old oak and walnut trees. The vines are here peculiarly picturesque; they are trellissed upon immense stakes, and the trunks of them are moss-covered and hoary with age. Unlike the French vines, which creep lowly on the ground, they form rows of interlaced bowers, which, when the leaves are green and the red grapes are hanging among those hoary branches, will afford a delightful shadow to those who sit upon the moss underneath. The vines are sometimes planted in the open fields, and sometimes among lofty orchards of apple and pear trees, the twigs of which were just becoming purple with the bursting blossoms.

We dined at Les Echelles, a village at the foot of the mountain of the same name, the boundaries of France and Savoy. Before this we had been stopped at Port Bonvoisin, where the legal limits of the French and Sardinian territories are placed. We here heard that a Milanese had been sent back all the way to Lyons, because his passport was unauthorised by the Sardinian Consul, a few days before, and that we should be subjected to the same treatment. We, in respect to the character of our nation I suppose, were suffered to pass. Our books, however, were, after a long discussion, sent to Chambery, to be submitted to the censor; a priest, who admits nothing of Rousseau, Voltaire, etc., into the dominions of the King of Sardinia.<sup>1</sup> All such books are burned.

After dinner we ascended Les Echelles, winding along a road cut through perpendicular rocks, of immense elevation, by Charles Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, in 1582. The rocks, which cannot be less than a thousand feet in perpendicular height, sometimes overhang the road on each

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<sup>1</sup> A canon who had met Sir Timothy Shelley at the Duke of Norfolk's happened to be present at the inspection, and so the books were allowed to pass.—Prof. Dowden's "Life of Shelley," Vol. II, p. 189.

side, and almost shut out the sky. The scene is like that described in the Prometheus of Æschylus. Vast rifts and caverns in the granite precipices, wintry mountains with ice and snow above ; the loud sounds of unseen waters within the caverns, and walls of toppling rocks, only to be scaled as he describes, by the winged chariot of the ocean nymphs.

Under the dominion of this tyranny, the inhabitants of the fertile valleys, bounded by these mountains, are in a state of most frightful poverty and disease. At the foot of this ascent, were cut into the rocks at several places, stories of the misery of the inhabitants, to move the compassion of the traveller. One old man, lame and blind, crawled out of a hole in the rock, wet with the perpetual melting of the snows of above, and dripping like a shower-bath.

The country, as we descended to Chambéry, continued as beautiful ; though marked with somewhat of a softer character than before : we arrived a little after night-fall.

### 293. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

MILAN,

April, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

Behold us arrived at length at the end of our journey—that is, within a few miles of it—because we design to spend the summer on the shore of the Lake of Como. Our journey was somewhat painful from the cold—and in no other manner interesting until we passed the Alps : of course I except the Alps themselves ; but no sooner had we arrived at Italy, than the loveliness of the earth and the serenity of the sky made the greatest difference in my sensations. I depend on these things for life ; for in the smoke of cities, and the tumult of human kind, and the chilling fogs and rain of our own country, I can hardly be said to live. With what delight did I hear the woman, who conducted us to

see the triumphal arch of Augustus at Susa, speak the clear and complete language of Italy, though half unintelligible to me, after that nasal and abbreviated cacophony of the French! A ruined arch of magnificent proportions in the Greek taste, standing in a kind of road of green lawn, overgrown with violets and primroses, and in the midst of stupendous mountains, and a *blonde* woman, of light and graceful manners, something in the style of Fuseli's Eve, were the first things we met in Italy.

This city is very agreeable. We went to the opera last night—which is a most splendid exhibition. The opera itself was not a favourite, and the singers very inferior to our own. But the ballet, or rather a kind of melodrama or pantomimic drama, was the most splendid spectacle I ever saw. We have no Miss Melanie<sup>1</sup> here—in every other respect, Milan is unquestionably superior. The manner in which language is translated into gesture, the complete and full effect of the whole as illustrating the history in question, the unaffected self-possession of each of the actors, even to the children, made this choral drama more impressive than I could have conceived possible. The story is *Othello*, and strange to say, it left no disagreeable impression.

I write, but I am not in the humour to write, and you must expect longer, if not more entertaining, letters soon—that is, in a week or so—when I am a little recovered from my journey. Pray tell us all the news with regard to our own offspring, whom we left at nurse in England as well as those of our friends. Mention Cobbett and politics too—and Hunt—to whom Mary is now writing—and particularly your own plans and yourself. You shall hear more of me and my plans soon. My health is improved

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<sup>1</sup> Peacock says that in the season of 1817, he persuaded Shelley to accompany him to the opera. "The performance was '*Don Giovanni*' . . . followed by a ballet, in which Mlle. Melanie was the principal *dansuse*. He was enchanted with this lady; said he had never imagined such grace of motion; and the impression was permanent."

already—and my spirits something—and I have many literary schemes, and one in particular—which I thirst to be settled that I may begin. I have ordered Ollier to send you some sheets, etc., for revision.

Adieu.—Always faithfully yours,  
P. B. S.

'294. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

MILAN,

April 20, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I had no conception that the distance between us, measured by time in respect of letters, was so great. I have but just received yours dated the 2nd—and when you will receive mine written from this city somewhat later than the same date, I cannot know. I am sorry to hear that you have been obliged to remain at Marlow; a certain degree of society being almost a necessity of life, particularly as we are not to see you this summer in Italy. But this, I suppose, must be as it is. I often revisit Marlow in thought. The curse of this life is, that whatever is once known, can never be unknown. You inhabit a spot, which before you inhabit it, is as indifferent to you as any other spot upon earth, and when, persuaded by some necessity, you think to leave it, you leave it not; it clings to you—and with memories of things, which, in your experience of them, gave no such promise, revenges your desertion. Time flows on, places are changed; friends who were with us, are no longer with us; yet what has been seems yet to be, but barren and stripped of life. See, I have sent you a study for "Nightmare Abbey."

Since I last wrote to you we have been to Como, looking for a house. This lake exceeds anything I ever beheld in beauty, with the exception of the arbutus islands of Killarney.<sup>1</sup> It is long and narrow, and has the appearance

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 397.

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of a mighty river winding among the mountains and the forests. We sailed from the town of Como to a tract of country called the Tremezina, and saw the various aspects presented by that part of the lake. The mountains between Como and that village, or rather cluster of villages, are covered on high with chestnut forests (the eating chestnuts, on which the inhabitants of the country subsist in time of scarcity), which sometimes descend to the very verge of the lake, overhanging it with their hoary branches. But usually the immediate border of this shore is composed of laurel-trees, and bay, and myrtle, and wild fig-trees, and olives which grow in the crevices of the rocks, and overhang the caverns, and shadow the deep glens, which are filled with the flashing light of the waterfalls. Other flowering shrubs, which I cannot name, grow there also. On high, the towers of village churches are seen white among the dark forests. Beyond, on the opposite shore, which faces the south, the mountains descend less precipitously to the lake, and although they are much higher, and some covered with perpetual snow, there intervenes between them and the lake a range of lower hills, which have glens and rifts opening to the other, such as I should fancy the *abysses* of Ida or Parnassus. Here are plantations of olive, and orange, and lemon trees, which are now so loaded with fruit, that there is more fruit than leaves—and vineyards. This shore of the lake is one continued village, and the Milanese nobility have their villas here. The union of culture and the untameable profusion and loveliness of nature is here so close, that the line where they are divided can hardly be discovered. But the finest scenery is that of the Villa Pliniana; so called from a fountain which ebbs and flows every three hours, described by the younger Pliny, which is in the courtyard. This house, which was once a magnificent palace, and is now half in ruins, we are endeavouring to procure. It is built upon terraces *raised from* the bottom of the lake, together with its garden, at the foot of a semicircular

precipice, overshadowed by profound forests of chestnut. The scene from the colonnade is the most extraordinary, at once, and the most lovely that eye ever beheld. On one side is the mountain, and immediately over you are clusters of cypress-trees, of an astonishing height, which seem to pierce the sky. Above you, from among the clouds, as it were, descends a waterfall of immense size, broken by the woody rocks into a thousand channels to the lake. On the other side is seen the blue extent of the lake and the mountains, speckled with sails and spires. The apartments of the Pliniana are immensely large, but ill furnished and antique. The terraces, which overlook the lake, and conduct under the shade of such immense laurel-trees as deserve the epithet of Pythian, are most delightful. We staid at Como two days, and have now returned to Milan, waiting the issue of our negotiation about a house. Como is only six leagues from Milan, and its mountains are seen from the cathedral.

This cathedral is a most astonishing work of art. It is built of white marble, and cut into pinnacles of immense height, and the utmost delicacy of workmanship, and loaded with sculpture. The effect of it, piercing the solid blue with those groups of dazzling spires, relieved by the serene depth of this Italian heaven, or by moonlight when the stars seem gathered among those clustered shapes, is beyond anything I had imagined architecture capable of producing. The interior, though very sublime, is of a more earthly character, and with its stained glass and massy granite columns overloaded with antique figures, and the silver lamps, that burn for ever under the canopy of black cloth beside the brazen altar and the marble fretwork of the dome, give it the aspect of some gorgeous sculchre. There is one solitary spot among these aisles, behind the altar, where the light of day is dim and yellow under the storied window, which I have chosen to visit, and read Dante there.

I have devoted this summer, and indeed the next year,



to the composition of a tragedy on the subject of Tasso's madness, which I find upon inspection is, if properly treated, admirably dramatic and poetical.<sup>1</sup> But, you will say, I have no dramatic talent; very true, in a certain sense; but I have taken the resolution to see what kind of a tragedy a person without dramatic talent could write. It shall be better morality than "Fazio,"<sup>2</sup> and better poetry than "Bertram,"<sup>3</sup> at least. You tell me nothing of "Rhododaphne,"<sup>4</sup> a book from which, I confess, I expected extraordinary success.

Who lives in my house at Marlow now, or what is to be done with it? I am seriously persuaded that the situation was injurious to my health, or I should be tempted to feel a very absurd interest in who is to be its next possessor. The expense of our journey here has been very considerable—but we are now living at the hotel here, in a kind of

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Shelley tells us in her note on "Prometheus Unbound" that during the first year of Shelley's residence in Italy "the poetical spirit within him speedily revived with all the power, and with more than all the beauty of his first attempts. He meditated three subjects as the groundwork for lyrical dramas. One was the story of Tasso; of this a slight fragment of a song of Tasso remains. The other was one founded on the book of Job, which he never abandoned in idea, but of which no trace remains among his papers. The third was the 'Prometheus Unbound.'"

<sup>2</sup> By Henry Hart Milman (1791-1868), Dean of St. Paul's. This tragedy was produced at Covent Garden in 1815. Peacock said that he remembered Shelley's absorbed attention to Miss O'Neill's performance of *Bianca* in "Fazio," "and it is evident to me that she was always in his thoughts when he drew the character of *Beatrice* in the 'Cenci.' With the exception of 'Fazio,' I do not remember his having been pleased at any performance at an English theatre."

<sup>3</sup> "Bertram," a tragedy by the Rev. Charles Robert Maturin, was produced with success at Drury Lane in 1816, through the influence of Byron.

<sup>4</sup> "Rhododaphne, or The Thessalian Spell," a poem by Peacock, which was published anonymously in 1818 by Hookham. Shelley's review of this book was probably the last piece of literary work done by him in England. Mary records in her journal for Friday, Feb. 20, 1818, "copy Shelley's critique on 'Rhododaphne.'" (Dowden, II, p. 183.) It was first printed by Mr. H. Buxton Forman in Shelley's *Prose Works*, Vol. III, p. 19.

Pension, which is very reasonable in respect of price, and when we get into a menage of our own, we have every reason to expect that we shall experience something of the boasted cheapness of Italy. The finest bread, made of a sifted flour, the whitest and the best I ever tasted, is only *one English penny* a pound. All the necessaries of life bear a proportional relation to this. But then the luxuries, tea, etc., are very dear,—and the English, as usual, are cheated in a way that is quite ridiculous, if they have not their wits about them. We do not know a single human being, and the opera, until last night, has been always the same. Lord Byron, we hear, has taken a house for three years, at Venice; whether we shall see him or not, I do not know. The number of English who pass through this town is very great. They ought to be in their own country in the present crisis. Their conduct is wholly inexcusable. The people here, though inoffensive enough, seem both in body and soul a miserable race. The men are hardly men; they look like a tribe of stupid and shrivelled slaves, and I do not think that I have seen a gleam of intelligence in the countenance of man since I passed the Alps. The women in enslaved countries are always better than the men; but they have tight-laced figures, and figures and mien which express (O how unlike the French!) a mixture of the coquette and prude, which reminds me of the worst characteristics of the English.<sup>1</sup> Everything but humanity is in much greater perfection here than in France. The cleanliness and comfort of the inns is something quite English. The country is beautifully cultivated; and altogether, if you can, as one ought always to do, find your

<sup>1</sup> These impressions of Shelley, with regard to the Italians, formed in ignorance, and with precipitation, became altogether altered after a longer stay in Italy. He quickly discovered the extraordinary intelligence and genius of this wonderful people, amidst the ignorance in which they are carefully kept by their rulers, and the vices, fostered by a religious system, which these same rulers have used as their most successful engine.—Note by Mrs. Shelley.

happiness in yourself, it is a most delightful and commodious place to live in.

Adieu.—Your affectionate friend,  
P. B. S.

295. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON HOGG

(London)

MILAN,

April 30, 1818.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received your note a few hours before I left England, and have designed to write to you from every town on the route; but the difficulty not so much of knowing what to say as how to say it prevented me till this moment. I am sorry that I did not see you again before my departure.<sup>1</sup> On my return, which will not perhaps take place so soon as I at first expected, we shall meet again; meanwhile my letters to Hunt and Peacock are, as it were, common property, of which, if you feel any curiosity about me which I neglect to satisfy myself, you are at liberty to avail yourself. To-morrow we leave this city for Pisa, where, or in its neighbourhood, we shall remain during the summer.

The Italians—at least those whom I have seen—are a very different people from the French. They have less character; and the women especially seem a very inferior race of beings. Their manners, so far as I can judge from their mien and physiognomy, are at once prudish and coquettish; their features bony; their figures thin; and those who have any claims to beauty have a beauty superficial and of a cold and unfeeling character. Their voices have none of that winning persuasiveness of those

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<sup>1</sup> Perhaps their final meeting was when Hogg dined with Shelley in London (apparently in Great Russell Street) on Sunday, Feb. 15, 1818. This is the last mention of Hogg in the extract printed by Prof. Dowden from Mary's journal at this date.

of France, but are hard and without inflexion or variety of tone. But this holds good, as far as I know, only to Milan, as my experience extends no further. The architecture of the cathedral of this city exceeds anything I ever saw in the Gothic style; it is far superior to York Minster or Westminster Abbey. The Opera is very good and the house larger or at least as large as that of London. They have Mad. Camporese here as the *prima donna*—a cold and unfeeling singer and a bad actress. The best singer is a man called David. Their ballets, which are a kind of pantomimic dance illustrative of some story, are much superior to anything of the kind in England. Indeed, they are wholly unlike anything represented on our stage, being a combination of a great number of figures grouped with the most picturesque and even poetical effect, and perpetually changing with motions the most harmoniously interwoven and contrasted with great effect. *Othello* is represented in one of these ballets, and the story is so well told in action as to leave upon the mind an impression as of a real tragedy.

We have been to the Lake of Como, and indeed had some thought of taking our residence there for the summer. The scenery is very beautiful, abounding among other things with those green banks for the sake of which you represented me as wandering over the world. You are more interested in the human part of the experience of travelling; a thing of which I see little and understand less, and which, if I saw and understood more, I fear I should be little able to describe. I am just reading a novel of Wieland's called "Aristippus," which I think you would like. It is very Greek, though perhaps not religious enough for a true Pagan. If you can get it otherwise, do not read it in the French translation, as the impudent translator has omitted much of the original, to accommodate it, as he says, to the "fastidious taste and powerful understanding of his countrymen."

I have read some Greek but not much on my journey---

two or three plays of Euripides—and among them the “Ion,” which you praised and which [I think]<sup>1</sup> is exquisitely beautiful. But I have [now] made some Italian book from my [wish] to learn the language, so as to speak it. I have been studying the history of Tasso’s life, with some idea of making a drama of his adventures and misfortunes [ ] such a subject would suit English poetry. Do not tell—

Address Poste Restante, Pisa.

Most sincerely yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

If you see Miss Lamb<sup>2</sup> present my compts., and tell her that I did not pass thro’ Paris, but that I put her letter in the nearest post. Remember me also to Dr. . .

## 296. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

MILAN,

April 30, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I write simply to tell you to direct your next letters, Poste Restante, Pisa. We have engaged a vetturino for that city, and leave Milan to-morrow morning. Our journey will occupy six or seven days.

Pisa is not six miles from the Mediterranean, with which it communicates by the river Arno. We shall pass by Piacenza, Parma, Bologna, the Apennines, and Florence,

<sup>1</sup> Part of the letter is injured. Prof. Dowden has supplied some of the words in brackets conjecturally. Most of the address of this letter is carefully scored through, but some words can still be deciphered. It seems to have been—

[THOMAS J. HOGG], Esq.,

[8 Garden Court],

Temple, London, Angleterre.

Endorsed, probably in Hogg’s writing, “The first letter Shelley wrote from Italy.”

<sup>2</sup> See p. 588.

and I will endeavour to tell you something of these celebrated places in my next letter; but I cannot promise much, for, though my health is much improved, my spirits are unequal, and seem to desert me when I attempt to write.

Pisa, they say, is uninhabitable in the midst of summer—we shall do, therefore, what other people do, retire to Florence, or to the mountains. But I will write to you our plans from Pisa, when I shall understand them better myself.

You may easily conjecture the motives which led us to forego the divine solitude of Como. To me, whose chief pleasure in life is the contemplation of nature, you may imagine how great is this loss.

Let us hear from you *once a fortnight*. Do not forget those who do not forget you.

Adieu.—Ever most sincerely yours,  
P. B. SHELLEY.

## 297. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

LIVORNO,<sup>1</sup>

June 5, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

We have not heard from you since the middle of April—that is, we have received only *one* letter from you since our departure from England. It necessarily follows that some accident has intercepted them. Address, in future, to the care of Mr. Gisborne, Livorno—and I shall receive

<sup>1</sup> According to Shelley's statement in this letter, they would have reached Pisa on May 7. Prof. Dowden says that Shelley, unaccompanied by Mary or Clare, "went to the Bagni di Lucca towards the end of May, probably in quest of a house. Mary's journal tells us that they arrived at Leghorn on May 9, and on that day they made the acquaintance of Mrs. Gisborne, who "calls in the evening with her husband; she is reserved yet with easy manners." Throughout the ensuing week they meet the Gisbornes every day.—Dowden's "Shelley," II, 209.

them, though sometimes somewhat circuitously, yet always securely.

We left Milan on the 1st of May, and travelled across the Apennines to Pisa. This part of the Apennines is far less beautiful than the Alps; the mountains are wide and wild, and the whole scenery broad and undetermined—the imagination cannot find a home in it. The Plain of the Milanese, and that of Parma, is exquisitely beautiful—it is like one garden, or rather cultivated wilderness; because the corn and the meadow-grass grow under high and thick trees, festooned to one another by regular festoons of vines. On the seventh day we arrived at Pisa, where we remained three or four days. A large disagreeable city, almost without inhabitants. We then proceeded to this great trading town, where we have remained a month, and which, in a few days, we leave for the Bagni di Lucca, a kind of watering-place situated in the depths of the Apennines; the scenery surrounding this village is very fine.

We have made some acquaintance with a very amiable and accomplished lady, Mrs. Gisborne, who is the sole attraction in this most unattractive of cities. We had no idea of spending a month here, but she has made it even agreeable. We shall see something of Italian society at the Bagni di Lucca, where the most fashionable people resort.

When you send my parcel—which, by-the-by, I should request you to direct to Mr. Gisborne—I wish you could contrive to enclose the two last parts of Clarke's "Travels,"<sup>1</sup> relating to Greece, and belonging to Hookham. You know I subscribe there still—and I have determined to take the *Examiner* here. You would, therefore, oblige me, by sending it weekly, after having read it yourself, to the same direction, and so clipped, as to make as little weight as possible.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Edward Daniel Clarke (1769-1822), whose "Travels" in six volumes were published in 1810-1823.

I write as if writing where perhaps my letter may never arrive.

With every good wish from all of us,

Believe me most sincerely yours,

P. B. S.

298. TO JOHN AND MARIA GISBORNE

(Leghorn)

BAGNI DI LUCCA,<sup>1</sup>

July 10, 1818.

You cannot know, as some friends in England do, to whom my silence is still more inexcusable, that this silence is no proof of forgetfulness or neglect.

I have, in truth, nothing to say, but that I shall be happy to see you again, and renew our delighted walks, until the desire or the duty of seeing new things hurries us away. We have spent a month here in our accustomed solitude, with the exception of one night at the Casino; and the choice society of all ages, which I took care to pack up in a large trunk before we left England, have revisited us here. I am employed just now, having little better to do, in translating into my faint and inefficient periods the divine eloquence of Plato's "Symposium;" only as an exercise, or, perhaps, to give Mary some idea of the manners and feelings of the Athenians—so different on many subjects from that of any other community that ever existed.

We have almost finished Ariosto—who is entertaining

<sup>1</sup> On June 11 the Shelleys moved to the Baths of Lucca. An example of Shelley's innumerable acts of generosity is shown in two unpublished letters written at this time. The first of them is written from the Baths of Lucca on the 28th of June, 1818, to Charles Ollier requesting him to pay £10 on the application of a person unnamed, but who will bring with him an undated note signed A.B. In a later letter to Ollier, undated but apparently written in August, 1818, Shelley asks him to honour a draft for £20, when presented by the same A.B.



and graceful, and *sometimes* a poet. Forgive me, worshippers of a more equal and tolerant divinity in poetry, if Ariosto pleases me less than you. Where is the gentle seriousness, the delicate sensibility, the calm and sustained energy, without which true greatness cannot be? He is so cruel, too, in his descriptions; his most prized virtues are vices almost without disguise. He constantly vindicates and embellishes revenge in its grossest form; the most deadly superstition that ever infested the world. How different from the tender and solemn enthusiasm of Petrarch—or even the delicate moral sensibility of Tasso, though somewhat obscured by an assumed and artificial style.

We read a good deal here—and we read little in Livorno. We have ridden, Mary and I, once only, to a place called Prato Fiorito, on the top of the mountains: the road, winding through forests, and over torrents, and on the verge of green ravines, affords scenery magnificently fine. I cannot describe it to you, but bid you, though vainly, come and see. I take great delight in watching the changes of the atmosphere here, and the growth of the thunder showers with which the moon is often overshadowed, and which break and fade away towards evening into flocks of delicate clouds. Our fire-flies are fading away fast; but there is the planet Jupiter, who rises majestically over the rift in the forest-covered mountains to the south, and the pale summer lightning which is spread out every night, at intervals, over the sky. No doubt Providence has contrived these things, that, when the fire-flies go out, the low-flying owl may see her way home.

Remember me kindly to the Machinista.<sup>1</sup>

With the sentiment of impatience until we see you again in the autumn,

I am, yours most sincerely,

P. B. SHELLEY.

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Reveley, Mrs. Gisborne's son by a former marriage, so called on account of his occupation, that of an engineer.

## 299. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

BAGNI DI LUCCA,

July 25, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I received on the same day your letters marked 5 and 6, the one directed to Pisa, and the other to Livorno, and I can assure you that they are most welcome visitors.

Our life here is as unvaried by any external events as if we were at Marlow, where a sail up the river or a journey to London makes an epoch. Since I last wrote to you, I have ridden over to Lucca, once with Clare, and once alone; and we have been over to the Casino, where I cannot say there is anything remarkable, the women being far removed from anything which the most liberal annotator could interpret into beauty or grace, and apparently possessing no intellectual excellences to compensate the deficiency. I assure you it is well that it is so, for these dances, especially the waltz, are so exquisitely beautiful that it would be a little dangerous to the newly unfrozen senses and imaginations of us migrators from the neighbourhood of the pole. As it is—except in the dark—there could be no peril. The atmosphere here, unlike that of the rest of Italy, is diversified with clouds, which grow in the middle of the day, and sometimes bring thunder and lightning, and hail about the size of a pigeon's egg, and decrease towards the evening, leaving only those finely woven webs of vapour which we see in English skies, and flocks of fleecy and slowly-moving clouds, which all vanish before sunset; and the nights are for ever serene, and we see a star in the east at sunset—I think it is Jupiter—almost as fine as Venus was last summer; but it wants a certain silver and aerial radiance, and soft yet piercing splendour, which belongs, I suppose, to the latter planet by virtue of its at once divine and female nature. I have forgotten to ask the ladies if Jupiter produces on them the same effect. I take great delight in watching the changes of the atmosphere. In the evening Mary and I

often take a ride, for horses are cheap in this country. In the middle of the day, I bathe in a pool or fountain, formed in the middle of the forests by a torrent. It is surrounded on all sides by precipitous rocks, and the waterfall of the stream which forms it falls into it on one side with perpetual dashing. Close to it, on the top of the rocks, are alders, and above the great chestnut trees, whose long and pointed leaves pierce the deep blue sky in strong relief. The water of this pool, which, to venture an unrythmical paraphrase, is "sixteen feet long and ten feet wide,"<sup>1</sup> is as transparent as the air, so that the stones and sand at the bottom seem, as it were, trembling in the light of noonday. It is exceedingly cold also. My custom [is] to undress, and sit on the rocks, reading Herodotus, until the perspiration has subsided, and then to leap from the edge of the rock into this fountain—a practice in the hot weather excessively refreshing. This torrent is composed, as it were, of a succession of pools and waterfalls, up which I sometimes amuse myself by climbing when I bathe, and receiving the spray over all my body, whilst I clamber up the moist crags with difficulty.

I have lately found myself totally incapable of original composition. I employed my mornings, therefore, in translating the "Symposium," which I accomplished in ten days. Mary is now transcribing it, and I am writing a prefatory essay. I have been reading scarcely anything but Greek, and a little Italian poetry with Mary. We have finished Ariosto together—a thing I could not have done again alone.

"Frankenstein" seems to have been well received; for although the unfriendly criticism of the *Quarterly* is an evil for it, yet it proves that it is read in some considerable

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Buxton Forman shows that Shelley was thinking of an early version of Wordsworth's poem "The Thorn."—

You see a little muddy pond of water, never dry;  
I've measured it from side to side:  
'Tis three feet long, and two feet wide.

degree, and it would be difficult for them with any appearance of fairness, to deny it merit altogether. Their notice of me, and their exposure of their true motives for not noticing my book, shews how well understood an hostility must subsist between me and them.

The news of the result of the elections, especially that of the metropolis, is highly inspiring. I received a letter, of two days' later date, with yours, which announced the unfortunate termination of that of Westmoreland. I wish you had sent me some of the overflowing villainy of those apostates. What a beastly and pitiful wretch that Wordsworth! That such a man should be such a poet! I can compare him with no one but Simonides, that flatterer of the Sicilian tyrants, and at the same time the most natural and tender of lyric poets.

What pleasure would it have given me if the wings of imagination could have divided the space which divides us, and I could have been of your party. I have seen nothing so beautiful as Virginia Water—in its kind. And my thoughts for ever cling to Windsor Forest, and the copses of Marlow, like the clouds which hang upon the woods of the mountains, low trailing, and though they pass away, leave their best dew when they themselves have faded. You tell me that you have finished "Nightmare Abbey." I hope that you have given the enemy no quarter. Remember, it is a sacred war. We have found an excellent quotation in Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour." I will transcribe it, as I do not think you have these plays at Marlow.

"MATTHEW. O, it's only your fine humour, sir. Your true melancholy breeds your fine wit, sir. I am melancholy myself divers times, sir; and then do I no more but take pen and paper presently, and overflow you half a score or a dozen of sonnets at a sitting.

"ED. KNOWELL. Sure, he utters them by the gross.

"STEPHEN. Truly, sir; and I love such things out of measure.

"ED. KNOWELL. I' faith, better than in measure, I'll undertake.

"MATTHEW. Why, I pray you, sir, make use of my study ; it's at your service.

"STEPHEN. I thank you, sir ; I shall be bold, I warrant you. *Have you a stool there to be melancholy upon ?*"—

"Every Man in his Humour," Act 3, scene i.

The last expression would not make a bad motto.<sup>1</sup>

300. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

(London)

BAGNI DI LUCCA,

July 25, 1818.

MY DEAR GODWIN,

We have, as yet, seen nothing of Italy which marks it to us as the habitation of departed greatness. The serene sky, the magnificent scenery, the delightful productions of the climate, are known to us, indeed, as the same with those which the ancients enjoyed. But Rome and Naples—even Florence, are yet to see ; and if we were to write to you at present a history of our impressions, it would give you no idea that we lived in Italy.

I am exceedingly delighted with the plan you propose of a book, illustrating the character of our calumniated Republicans.<sup>2</sup> It is precisely the subject for Mary ; and I imagine that, but for the fear of being excited to refer to books not within her reach, she would attempt to begin it here, and order the works you notice. I am unfortunately little skilled in English history, and the interest which it excites in me is so feeble, that I find it a duty to

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<sup>1</sup> Peacock adopted this passage as a second motto (omitting E. Knowell's interlocutions) for his novel, "Nightmare Abbey," which was published this year (1818).

<sup>2</sup> In Godwin's letter to Shelley from Skinner Street, June 18, 1818, he sketches the plan of a book "to be called *The Lives of the Commonwealth's Men*." Godwin says that he will never write it himself, but he thought that Mary might like to do so, and he adds a list of books to be consulted. Godwin, however, did write some years later a "History of the Commonwealth of England," 1824-28.

attain merely to that general knowledge of it which is indispensable.

Mary has just finished Ariosto with me, and, indeed, has attained a very competent knowledge of Italian. She is now reading "Livy." I have been constantly occupied in literature, but have written little—except some translations from Plato, in which I exercised myself, in the despair of producing anything original. The "Symposium" of Plato, seems to me one of the most valuable pieces of all antiquity; whether we consider the intrinsic merit of the composition, or the light which it throws on the inmost state of manners and opinions among the ancient Greeks. I have occupied myself in translating this, and it has excited me to attempt an Essay upon the cause of some differences in sentiment between the Ancients and Moderns, with respect to the subject of the dialogue.

Two things give us pleasure in your last letters. The resumption of Malthus, and the favourable turn of the general election.<sup>1</sup> If Ministers do not find some means, totally inconceivable to me, of plunging the nation in war, do you imagine that they can subsist? Peace is all that a country, in the present state of England, seems to require,

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<sup>1</sup> Godwin writes to Mary on July 7, 1818, that "I am now over head and ears in my answer to Malthus." This book, "On Population," was published by Longman on Nov. 25, 1820, at the author's expense. In the same letter he says, "The Westminster election closes on Saturday, and the result of the whole in this division is, that the metropolis, which sends eight members—four for London, two for Westminster, and two for Southwark—has not sent, in its whole number, one old supporter of the present Administration. The members for Westminster are Romilly and Burdett; for Southwark, Calvert, a veteran Foxite, and Sir Robert Wilson; and for London Alderman Wood, Alderman Morp, and Waithman (all staunch Oppositionists), and Mr. Wilson, a new man, who will in all probability vote for Government, but who is at least not an old supporter. Sir William Curtis for London—their right-hand man—is thrown out. The consequence of all this is, that everybody is of opinion that, if time had been given, and these examples had been sufficiently early, the general defeat of the Ministry would have been memorable. As it is, it is computed that the Ministerial majority will immediately be diminished by forty or fifty votes; and sanguine people say, nobody can tell what that may end in."

to afford it tranquillity and leisure for attempting some remedy; not to the universal evils of all constituted society, but to the peculiar system of misrule under which those evils have been exasperated now. I wish that I had health or spirits that would enable me to enter into public affairs, or that I could find words to express all that I feel and know.

The modern Italians seem a miserable people, without sensibility, or imagination, or understanding. Their outside is polished, and an intercourse with them seems to proceed with much facility, though it ends in nothing, and produces nothing. The women are particularly empty, and though possessed of the same kind of superficial grace, are devoid of every cultivation and refinement. They have a ball at the Casino here every Sunday, which we attend—but neither Mary nor Claire dance. I do not know whether they refrain from philosophy or protestantism.

I hear that poor Mary's book, "Frankenstein," is attacked most violently in the *Quarterly Review*. We have heard some praise of it, and among others, an article of Walter Scott's in *Blackwood's Magazine*.<sup>1</sup>

If you should have anything to send us—and, I assure you, anything relating to England is interesting to us—commit it to the care of Ollier the bookseller, or Peacock; they send me a parcel every quarter.

My health is, I think, better, and, I imagine, continues to improve, but I still have busy thoughts and dispiriting cares, which I would shake off—and it is now summer.—A thousand good wishes to yourself and your undertakings.

Ever most affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

To

Mr. WILLIAM GODWIN,  
London.

<sup>1</sup> Shelley wrote "from the Baths of Lucca to Scott, probably in acknowledgment of the article,"—Dowden, II, p. 303.

Gentlemen

I think I accepted especially a note of Fifty  
Dollars given to Mrs. Gardner from the which I  
requested you not to pay. - If otherwise I beg you would  
have the goodness now to pay it, & to explain on  
my part to Mrs. Gardner how the matter stands.

I would thank you also to send me  
the present state of my accounts

I remain, Gentlemen,  
your obliged servant

Wm. A. Lucca

July 31. 1840.

Wm. A. Lucca



Super. Broderick & Co.

by James of W. Johnson Esq

301. To BROOKES & Co.  
(London)

BAGNI DI LUCCA,  
July 31, 1818

GENTLEMEN,

I think I excepted especially a note of Fifty Pounds to Mr. Godwin from those which I requested you not to pay. If otherwise I beg you would have the goodness now to pay it, and to explain on my part to Mr. Godwin how the matter stands.

I would thank you also to transmit to me the present state of my accounts.

I remain, Gentlemen,  
Your obliged Servant,  
PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

[Addressed outside],  
Messrs BROOKES & Co.,  
By favour of W. GODWIN, Esq.

302. To THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

BAGNI DE LUCCA,  
Aug[ust] 16, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

No new event has been added to my life since I wrote last. at least none which might not have taken place as well on the banks of the Thames as on those of the Serchio. I project soon a short excursion, of a week or so, to some of the neighbouring cities, and on the tenth of September we leave this place for Florence, when I shall at least be able to tell you of some things which you cannot see from your windows.

I have finished, by taking advantage of a few days of inspiration—which the *Camæna* have been lately very backward in conceding—the little poem I began sending

to the press in London.<sup>1</sup> Ollier will send you the proofs. Its structure is slight and aery; its subject ideal. The metre corresponds with the spirit of the poem, and varies with the flow of the feeling. I have translated, and Mary has transcribed the "Symposium," as well as my poem; and I am proceeding to employ myself on a discourse, upon the subject of which the "Symposium" treats, considering the subject with reference to the difference of sentiments respecting it, existing between the Greeks and modern nations: a subject to be handled with that delicate caution which either I cannot or I will not practise in other matters, but which here I acknowledge to be necessary. Not that I have any serious thought of publishing either this discourse or the "Symposium," at least till I return to England, when we may discuss the propriety of it.

"Nightmare Abbey" finished. Well, what is in it? What is it? You are as secret as if the priest of Ceres had dictated its sacred pages. However, I suppose I shall see in time, when my second parcel arrives. My first is yet absent. By what conveyance did you send it?

Pray, are you yet cured of your Nympholepsy? 'Tis a sweet disease: but one as obstinate and dangerous as any—even when the Nymph is a Poliad.<sup>2</sup> Whether such

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<sup>1</sup> "Rosalind and Helen, / a modern eclogue; / with / other Poems: / By / Percy Bysshe Shelley, / London: / Printed for C. and J. Ollier, / Vere Street, Bond Street, / 1819." 8vo. Mrs. Shelley says that this poem "was begun at Marlow, and thrown aside—till I found it; and, at my request it was completed . . . during the summer of 1818 at the Baths of Lucca." It was published in the Spring of 1819, with "Lines written among the Euganean Hills," the "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," and "Ozymandias."

<sup>2</sup> Peacock says, "I suppose I understood this at the time; but I have now not the most distant recollection of what it alludes to." Shelley, who had brought Leigh Hunt's "Foliage" with him to Italy, had read in the poem entitled "The Nymphs" of "Oreads, Napeads, Limniads, Nepheliads," and as Prof. Dowden says, they "probably suggested to Shelley the word 'Poliad,' a city nymph, which appears in this letter." ("Life of Shelley," Vol. II, p. 188.) Peacock adds that he abandoned the design of the Nympholeptic tale on seeing the announcement of Horace Smith's "Amarnthus the Nympholept."

be the case or not, I hope your nympholeptic tale is not abandoned. The subject, if treated with a due spice of Bacchic fury, and interwoven with the manners and feelings of those divine people, who, in their very errors, are the mirrors, as it were, in which all that is delicate and graceful contemplates itself, is perhaps equal to any. What a wonderful passage there is in "Phædrus"—the beginning, I think, of one of the speeches of Socrates<sup>1</sup>—in praise of poetic madness, and in definition of what poetry is, and how a man becomes a poet. Every man who lives in this age and desires to write poetry, ought, as a preservative against the false and narrow systems of criticism which every poetical empiric vents, to impress himself with this sentence, if he would be numbered among those to whom may apply this proud, though sublime, expression of Tasso: "*Non c'è in mondo chi merita nome di creatore, che Dio ed il Poeta.*"

The weather has been brilliantly fine; and now, among these mountains, the autumnal air is becoming less hot, especially in the mornings and evenings. The chestnut woods are now inexpressibly beautiful, for the chestnuts have become large, and add a new richness to the full foliage. We see here Jupiter in the east; and Venus, I believe, as the evening star, directly after sunset.

More and better in my next. Mary and Claire desire their kind remembrances.—Most faithfully your friend,

P. B. SHELLEY.

<sup>1</sup> The passage alluded to is this:—"There are several kinds," says Socrates, "of divine madness. That which proceeds from the Muses taking possession of a tender and unoccupied soul, awakening, and bacchically inspiring it towards songs and other poetry, adorning myriads of ancient deeds, instructs succeeding generations, but he who, without this madness from the Muses, approaches the poetical gates, having persuaded himself that by art alone he may become sufficiently a poet, will find in the end his own imperfection, and see the poetry of his cold prudence vanish into nothingness before the light of that which has sprung from divine insanity."—"Platonis Phædrus," p. 245a.—Peacock's note.

303. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY  
(Bagni di Lucca)

FLORENCE,<sup>1</sup>

THURSDAY, 11 o'clock,

(August 20, 1818).

DEAREST MARY,

We have been delayed in this city four hours, for the Austrian minister's passport, but are now on the point of setting out with a vetturino, who engages to take us on the third day to Padua; that is, we shall only sleep three nights on the road. Clare's plans with regard to Albè have undergone a good deal of modification, and her present impression is that I should call on Albè whilst she remains either at Fusina or Padua, so as not to irritate him by entering the same city, but not to conceal—and there I think she is right—her having departed from Lucca. The worst of this plan is, that it will not succeed, and that

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley had written to Byron from Lyons on March 22, 1818, telling him that he had brought Allegra so far on her journey; he also wrote from Milan inviting Byron to visit him when he could, and to take the child into his charge. Although Byron had refused to correspond with Clare, she wrote to him on April 21st to comply with his desire to have the possession of Allegra, notwithstanding that he had made it clear in writing that Clare's farewell to the child must be absolute and final. Soon after the despatch of her letter, Shelley heard at the Milan post-office from a Venetian some sinister reports of Byron's way of life. But Clare, having decided, would not withdraw, although Shelley seems to have warned her that she was in danger of losing the child altogether. Accordingly, on April 28, Elise, Mary's Swiss maid, set out with Allegra for Venice, and remained with the child as nurse. Allegra was subsequently placed in the charge of Mrs. Hoppner, wife of the English Consul-General at Venice. As the months passed, Clare's longing to see her little girl increased, and after the receipt of some letters from Elise, she decided to go to Venice in order to induce Byron to let her see the child. She therefore left the Baths with Shelley as travelling companion, probably on August the 18th or 19th, the day before Shelley wrote this letter. See Shelley's letter to Peacock, Oct. 8, 1818, in which he gives the approximate date of his departure as the "day after I wrote to you" [on Aug. 16]. I have derived this note from Prof. Dowden's "Life of Shelley," in most cases using his words.

she will never be quite satisfied that all has been done. But we shall see. Yesterday's journey, performed in a one-horse cabriolet, almost without springs, over a rough road, was excessively fatiguing. [Clare] suffered most from it; for, as to myself, there are occasions in which fatigue seems a useful medicine, as I have felt no pain in my side—a most delightful respite—since I left you. The country was various and exceedingly beautiful. Sometimes there were those low cultivated lands, with their vine festoons, and large bunches of grapes just becoming purple—at others we passed between high mountains, crowned with some of the most majestic Gothic ruins I ever saw, which frowned from the bare precipices, or were half seen among the olive-copses. As we approached Florence, the country became cultivated to a very high degree, the plain was filled with the most beautiful villas, and, as far as the eye could reach, the mountains were covered with them; for the plains are bounded on all sides by blue and misty mountains. The vines are here trailed on low trellises or reeds interwoven into crosses to support them, and the grapes, now almost ripe, are exceedingly abundant. You everywhere meet those teams of beautiful white oxen, which are now labouring the little vine-divided fields with their Virgilian ploughs and carts. Florence itself, that is the Lung' Arno (for I have seen no more), I think is the most beautiful city I have yet seen. It is surrounded with cultivated hills, and from the bridge which crosses the broad channel of the Arno, the view is the most animated and elegant I ever saw. You see three or four bridges, one apparently supported by Corinthian pillars, and the white sails of the boats, relieved by the deep green of the forest, which comes to the water's edge, and the sloping hills covered with bright villas on every side. Domes and steeples rise on all sides, and the cleanliness is remarkably great. On the other side there are the foldings of the Vale of Arno above; first the hills of olive and vine, then the

chestnut woods, and then the blue and misty pine forests, which invest the aërial Apennines, that fade in the distance. I have seldom seen a city so lovely at first sight as Florence.

We shall travel hence within a few hours, with the speed of the post, since the distance is 190 miles, and we are to do it in three days, besides the half-day, which is somewhat more than sixty miles a day. We have now got a comfortable carriage and two mules, and, thanks to Paolo, have made a very decent bargain, comprising everything, to Padua. I should say we had delightful fruit for breakfast—figs, very fine—and peaches, unfortunately gathered before they were ripe, whose smell was like what one fancies of the wakening of Paradise flowers.

Well, my dearest Mary, are you very lonely? Tell me truth, my sweetest, do you ever cry? I shall hear from you once at Venice, and once on my return here. If you love me you will keep up your spirits—and at all events tell me truth about it; for I assure you I am not of a disposition to be flattered by your sorrow, though I should be by your cheerfulness; and above all, by seeing such fruits of my absence as were produced when we were at Geneva.<sup>1</sup> What acquaintances have you made? I might have travelled to Padua with a German, who had just come from Rome, and had scarce recovered from a malarial fever, caught in the Pontine Marshes, a week or two since; and I conceded to [Clare's] intreaties—and to *your* absent suggestions, and omitted the opportunity, although I have no great faith in such species of contagion. It is not very hot—not at all too much so for my sensations, and the only thing that incommodes me are the gnats at night, who roar like so many humming-tops in one's ear—and I do not always find zanzariere.<sup>2</sup> How is Willmouse and little Ca?<sup>3</sup> They must be kissed for me—and you must particularly remember to speak my name to William,

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<sup>1</sup> When she began to write "Frankenstein."

<sup>2</sup> Mosquito curtains.

<sup>3</sup> Shelley's two children, William and Clara.

and see that he does not quite forget me before I return. Adieu—my dearest girl, I think that we shall soon meet. I shall write again from Venice. Adieu, dear Mary!

I have been reading the "Noble Kinsmen," in which, with the exception of that lovely scene, to which you added so much grace in reading to me, I have been disappointed. The Jailor's Daughter is a poor imitation, and deformed. The whole story wants moral discrimination and modesty. I do not believe that Shakespeare wrote a word of it.

304. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

(Bagni di Lucca)

VENICE,

SUNDAY MORNING,

[August 23, 1818.]

MY DEAREST MARY,

We arrived here last night at twelve o'clock, and it is now before breakfast the next morning. I can, of course, tell you nothing of the future; and though I shall not close this letter till post time, yet I do not know exactly when that is. Yet, if you are very impatient, look along the letter and you will see another date, when I may have something to relate.

Clare changed her plan of remaining at Padua, partly from the badness of the beds, which indeed are full of those insects, inexpressible by Italian delicacy, and partly from the strangeness and solitude of the place. At present I believe I shall call on the Albaneser with a letter from her, and without any direct interference on my own part. He will not be up yet, and the interval she proposes to employ in a visit to Mrs. Hoppner. All this casts, as you see, "ominous conjecture on the whole success."

I came from Padua hither in a gondola, and the gondoliere, among other things, without any hint on my part, began talking of Lord Byron. He said he was a *giovinotto Inglese*, with a *nome stravagante*, who lived very luxuriously,



and spent great sums of money, [and had lately received] two of his daughters over from England, [of whom one] looked nearly as old as himself. This man, it seems, was one of Lord B.'s gondolieri. No sooner had we arrived at the inn, than the waiter began talking about him—said that he frequented Mrs. Hoppner's *conversazioni* very much.

Our journey from Florence to Padua contained nothing which may not be related another time. At Padua, as I said, we took a gondola—and left it at three o'clock. These gondolas are the most beautiful and convenient boats in the world. They are finely carpeted and furnished with black, and painted black. The couches on which you lean are extraordinarily soft, and are so disposed as to be the most comfortable to those who lean or sit. The windows have at will either Venetian plate-glass flowered, or Venetian blinds, or blinds of black cloth to shut out the light. The weather here is extremely cold—indeed, sometimes very painfully so, and yesterday it began to rain. We passed the laguna in the middle of the night in a most violent storm of wind, rain, and lightning. It was very curious to observe the elements above in a state of such tremendous convulsion, and the surface of the water almost calm; for these lagunas, though five miles broad, a space enough in a storm to sink a gondola, are so shallow that the boatmen drive the boat along with a pole. The sea-water, furiously agitated by the wind, shone with sparkles like stars. Venice, now hidden and now disclosed by the driving rain, shone dimly with its lights. We were all this while safe and comfortable, except that Clare was now and then a little frightened in our cabin. [It was midnight when they reached their hotel.] Well, adieu, dearest: I shall, as Miss Byron<sup>1</sup> says, resume the pen in the evening.

<sup>1</sup> Harriet Byron is one of the characters in Richardson's novel, 'Sir Charles Grandison.'

SUNDAY NIGHT,  
5 o'clock in the morning.

Well, I will try to relate everything in its order. After breakfast we took a gondola and went to the Hoppner's.<sup>1</sup> Clare went in first, and I, who had no idea of calling, sat in the gondola. Soon, a servant came down and requested me to go up-stairs. I found Mr. Hoppner and Clare, and soon after Mrs. Hoppner, a most agreeable and amiable lady, who instantly paid Clare the kindest attentions. They received me with great politeness, and expressed the greatest interest in the event of our journey. Soon after—for Mrs. Hoppner sent for them instantly—came Elise and little Ba, so grown you would hardly know her; she is pale and has lost a good deal of her liveliness, but is as beautiful as ever, though more mild. The account which they gave of Albè unfortunately corresponds too justly with most of what we have heard, though doubtless with some exaggeration. We discussed a long time the mode in which I had better proceed with him, and at length determined that Clare's being there should be concealed, as Mr. Hoppner says that he often expresses his extreme horror of her arrival, and the necessity which it would impose on him of instantly quitting Venice. The Hoppners enter into all this as if it were their own dearest concern.

At three o'clock I called on Lord Byron: he was delighted to see me, and our first conversation of course consisted in the object of my visit.<sup>2</sup>

The success of this is yet doubtful, though certainly the spirit in which he receives the request, and the anxiety he shows to satisfy us and Clare, is very unexpected. He says he does not like her [Allegra] going away to Florence for so long a time, because the Venetians will think that

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Belgrave Hoppner (1786-1872), second son of John Hoppner, R.A., studied painting with the intention of becoming an artist. He was appointed English Consul at Venice in 1814. His wife was of Swiss nationality.

<sup>2</sup> See note on p. 616.

he has grown tired of her and dismissed her; and he has already the reputation of caprice. Then he said, "Why, Clare will be as unwilling to part with her again as she is to be absent from her now, and there will be a second renewal of affliction and a second parting. But if you like she shall go to Clare to Padua for a week" (when he said this he supposed that you and the family were there); "and in fact," said he, "after all, I have no right over the child. If Clare likes to take it, let her take it. I do not say what most people would in that situation, that I will refuse to provide for it, or abandon it, if she does this; but she must surely be aware herself how very imprudent such a measure would be."

Well, my dear Mary, this talk went off, for I did not see in that moment how I could urge it further, and I thought that at least many points were gained in the willingness and good humour of our discussion. So he took me in his gondola—much against my will, for I wanted to return to Clare at the Hoppners', who was anxiously waiting for me, across the laguna to a long sandy island, which defends Venice from the Adriatic.<sup>1</sup> When we disembarked, we found his horses waiting for us, and we rode along the sands of the sea, talking. Our conversation

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley has immortalised this ride with Byron on the Lido, "the bank of land which breaks the flow Of Adria towards Venice," in his "Julian and Maddalo," and has given us a picture of Allegra, now nineteen months old, as she appeared to him at this time—

A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made;  
 A serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being;  
 Graceful without design, and unforeseeing;  
 With eyes—oh! speak not of her eyes! which seem  
 Twin mirrors of Italian Heaven, yet gleam  
 With such deep meaning as we never see  
 But in the human countenance. With me  
 She was a special favourite; I had nursed  
 Her fine and feeble limbs, when she came first  
 To this bleak world; and yet she seemed to know  
 On second sight her ancient playfellow,  
 Less changed than she was by six months or so.  
 For, after her first shyness was worn out,  
 We sat there rolling billiard balls about. . . .

consisted in histories of his wounded feelings, and questions as to my affairs, and great professions of friendship and regard for me. He said, that if he had been in England at the time of the Chancery affair,<sup>1</sup> he would have moved heaven and earth to have prevented such a decision. We talked of literary matters, his Fourth Canto,<sup>2</sup> which, he says, is very good, and indeed repeated some stanzas of great energy to me; and "Foliage," which he quizzes immoderately. When we returned to his palace—which

*(The letter is here torn)*

The Hoppners are the most amiable people I ever knew. Do you know that they put off a journey of pleasure solely that they might devote themselves to this affair, and all with so much ease, tenderness, and delicacy. They are much attached to each other, and have a nice little boy, seven months old. Mr. Hoppner paints beautifully, and this excursion, which he has just put off, was an expedition to the Julian Alps, in this neighbourhood—for the sake of sketching, to procure winter employment. He has only a fortnight's leisure, and he has sacrificed two days of it to strangers whom he never saw before. Mrs. Hoppner has hazel eyes and sweet looks—rather Maryish.

Well, but the time presses; I am now going to the banker's to send you money for the journey, which I shall address to you at Florence, Post-office. Pray come instantly to Este,<sup>3</sup> where I shall be waiting in the utmost

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<sup>1</sup> When Shelley's children, by his first wife, were taken from him by order of Chancery, see *ante*, p. 538.

<sup>2</sup> The Fourth Canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," published in 1818.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Byron had placed his villa I Cappuccini, near Este, at Shelley's disposal. Hoppner formerly lived at this house, and Byron had now rented it of him, though he never occupied it. In her notes to Shelley's poems of 1818, Mrs. Shelley describes I Cappuccini as "a villa built on the site of a Capuchin convent, demolished when the French suppressed religious houses; it was situated on the very over-hanging brow of a low hill at the foot of a range of higher ones. The house was cheerful and pleasant; a

anxiety for your arrival. You can pack up directly you get this letter, and employ the next day on that. The day after, get up at four o'clock, and go post to Lucca, where you will arrive at six. Then take a vetturino for Florence to arrive the same evening. From Florence to Este is three days' vetturino journey—and you could not, I think, do it quicker by the post. Make Paolo<sup>1</sup> take you to good inns, as we found very bad ones; and pray avoid the Tre Mori at Bologna, *perche vi sono cose inesprcissibili nei letti*. I do not think you can, but *try* to get from Florence to Bologna in one day. Do not take the post, for it is not much faster and very expensive. I have been obliged to decide on all these things without you: I have done for the best—and, my own beloved Mary, you must soon come and scold me if I have done wrong, and kiss me if I have done right—for, I am sure, I do not know which—and it is only the event that will show. We shall at least be saved the trouble of introduction, and have formed acquaintance with a lady [Mrs. Hoppner] who is so good, so beautiful, so angelically mild, that were she as wise too, she would be quite a Mary; but she is not very accomplished. Her eyes are like a reflection of yours. Her manners are like yours when you know and like a person.

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vine-trellised walk, a Pergola, as it is called in Italian, led from the hall door to a summer-house at the end of the garden, which Shelley made his study, and in which he began the 'Prometheus'; and here also, as he mentions in a letter, he wrote 'Julian and Maddalo'; a slight ravine, with a road in its depth, divided the garden from the hill, on which stood the ancient castle of Este, whose dark massive wall gave forth an echo, and from whose ruined crevices owls and bats flitted forth at night, as the crescent moon sank behind the black and heavy battlements. We looked from the garden over the wide plain of Lombardy, bounded to the west by the fair Apennines, while to the east the horizon was lost in misty distance. After the picturesque but limited view of mountain, ravine, and chestnut wood at the Baths of Lucca, there was something infinitely gratifying to the eye in the wide range of prospect commanded by our new abode." Mary set out for Este on August 31. Her little girl, Clara, was taken ill on the journey, and when she arrived the child's condition was serious.

<sup>1</sup> Shelley's servant, who afterwards married Elise.

Do you know, dearest, how this letter was written? By scraps and patches, and interrupted every minute. The gondola is now come to take me to the banker's. Este is a little place, and the house found without difficulty. I shall count four days for this letter: one day for packing, four for coming here—and on the ninth or tenth day we shall meet.

I am too late for the post—but I send an express to overtake it. Enclosed is an order for fifty pounds. If you knew all that I had to do!—

Dearest love, be well, be happy, come to me—confide in your own constant and affectionate P. B. S.

Kiss the blue-eyed darlings for me, and do not let William forget me. Ca<sup>1</sup> cannot recollect me.

### 305. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

(I Cappuccini—Este)

PADUA, MEZZOGIORNO,<sup>2</sup>

September 22, 1818.

MY BEST MARY,

I found at Mount Selice a favourable opportunity for going to Venice, where I shall try to make some arrangement for you and little Ca. to come for some days, and shall meet you, if I do not write anything in the meantime, at Padua, on Thursday morning [September 24.] Clare says she is obliged to come to see the Medico, whom we missed this morning, and who has appointed as the only hour at which he can be at leisure—half-past eight in the morning. You must, therefore, arrange matters so that you should come to the Stella d'Oro a little before that hour—a thing to be accomplished only by setting out at half-past three in the morning. You will by this means arrive at Venice very early in the day, and avoid the heat,

<sup>1</sup> Clara Shelley was just a year old, having been born at Marlow on Sept. 3rd, 1817. She died Sept. 24th, 1818.

<sup>2</sup> On Sept. 16th Mary writes in her Journal that Shelley and Clare go to Padua.

which might be bad for the babe, and take the time, when she would at least sleep great part of the time. Clare will return with the return carriage, and I shall meet you, or send you to Padua.

Meanwhile remember "Charles the First"—and do you be prepared to bring at least *some* of "Myrrha"<sup>1</sup> translated; bring the book also with you, and the sheets of "Prometheus Unbound," which you will find numbered from one to twenty-six on the table of the pavilion. My poor little Clara, how is she to-day? Indeed I am somewhat uneasy about her, and though I feel secure that there is no danger, it would be very comfortable to have some reasonable person's opinion about her. The Medico at Padua is certainly a man in great practice, but I confess he does not satisfy me.

Am I not like a wild swan to be gone so suddenly? But, in fact, to set off alone to Venice required an exertion. I felt myself capable of making it, and I knew that you desired it. What will not be—if so it is destined—the lonely journey through that wide, cold France? But we shall see. As yet I do not direct to you *Lady* Shelley.<sup>2</sup>

Adieu, my dearest love—remember "Charles I" and "Myrrha." I have been already imagining how you will conduct some scenes. The second volume of "St. Leon" begins with this proud and true sentiment—"There is nothing which the human mind can conceive, which it may not execute." Shakspeare was only a human being.

Adieu till Thursday.—Your ever affectionate

P. B. S.

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Shelley states in her notes to Shelley's poems of 1822 that he had recommended her to attempt a play on Charles I. This passage evidently relates to Mary's work on the subject; and to a translation of Alfieri's "Myrrha" upon which she was apparently engaged. Shelley's fragments of his drama "Charles the First" belong to a later period.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Dowden suggests that perhaps Shelley had received news which led him to expect his father's death; in which case he would have to return to England.

## 306. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT

[VENICE.] Mrs. Hoppner's, FRIDAY.  
[September 25, 1818.]

MY DEAR CLARE,

We arrived at Venice yesterday [September 24] about five o'clock.<sup>1</sup> Our little girl had shown symptoms of increased weakness and even convulsive motions of the mouth and eyes, which made me anxious to see the physician. As she passed from Fusina to the Inn, she became worse. I left her on landing and took a gondola for Dr. Alietti.<sup>2</sup> He was not at home.—When I returned, I found Mary in the hall of the Inn in the most dreadful distress.

Worse symptoms had appeared. Another Physician had arrived. He told me there was no hope. In about an hour—how shall I tell you—she died—silently, without pain. And she is now buried.

The Hoppners instantly came and took us to their house—a kindness I should have hesitated to accept, but this unexpected stroke reduced Mary to a kind of despair.

She is better to-day.

I have sent a message to Albè, to say that I cannot see him to-day—unless he will call here. Mary means to try and persuade him to let Allegra stay.

All is miserable enough—is it not? but must be borne [one line is here erased]—And above all, my dear girl, take care of yourself.

Your affectionate friend,

P. B. S.

[Addressed outside],  
Signora CLAIRMONT.

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Shelley says in her journal, Thursday, September 24, [1818]: "We go to Venice with my poor Clara, who dies the moment we get there. Mr. Hoppner comes, and takes us away from the inn to his house." Clara was buried on the Lido.—Prof. Dowden's "Life of Shelley," Vol. II, pp. 230-1.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Aglietti died in May, 1836, aged 79.



## 307. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

[I CAPPUCCINI], ESTE,<sup>1</sup>

October 8, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I have not written to you, I think, for six weeks. But I have been on the point of writing many times, and have often felt that I had many things to say. But I have not been without events to disturb and distract me, amongst which is the death of my little girl. She died of a disorder peculiar to the climate. We have all had bad spirits enough, and I, in addition, bad health. I *intend* to be better soon: there is no malady, bodily or mental, which does not either kill or is killed.

We<sup>2</sup> left the Baths of Lucca, I think, the day after I wrote to you [Monday, Aug. 17]—on a visit to Venice—partly for the sake of seeing the city. We made a very delightful acquaintance there with a Mr. and Mrs. Hoppner, the gentleman an Englishman, and the lady a Swissesse, mild and beautiful, and unprejudiced, in the best sense of the word. The kind attentions of these people made our short stay at Venice very pleasant. I saw Lord Byron, and really hardly knew him again; he is changed into the liveliest and happiest-looking man I ever met. He read me the first canto of his "Don Juan"—a thing in the style of "Beppo," but infinitely better, and dedicated to Southey, in ten or a dozen stanzas, more like a mixture of worm-wood and verdigrease than satire.<sup>3</sup> Venice is a wonderfully fine city. The approach to it over the laguna, with its domes and turrets glittering in a long line over the blue

<sup>1</sup> Mary says in her journal, Tuesday, Sept. 29: "Leave Venice and arrive at Este at night. Claire is gone with the children [William and Allegra] to Padua. Wednesday, Sep. 30. The chicks return. Transcribe 'Mazeppa.' Go to the opera in the evening."—Dowden's "Shelley," II, p. 232.

<sup>2</sup> That is, Shelley and Miss Clairmont; Mrs. Shelley having remained at the Bagni di Lucca.

<sup>3</sup> Byron states that he began to write the first canto of "Don Juan" at Venice on Sept. 6, and finished on Nov. 1, 1818. The dedication was not printed with the first edition of the canto, 1819.

waves, is one of the finest architectural delusions in the world. It seems to have—and literally it has—its foundations in the sea. The silent streets are paved with water, and you hear nothing but the dashing of the oars, and the occasional cries of the gondolieri. I heard nothing of Tasso.<sup>1</sup> The gondolas themselves are things of a most romantic and picturesque appearance; I can only compare them to moths of which a coffin might have been the chrysalis. They are hung with black, and painted black, and carpeted with grey; they curl at the prow and stern, and at the former there is a nondescript beak of shining steel, which glitters at the end of its long black mass.

The Doge's palace, with its library, is a fine monument of aristocratic power. I saw the dungeons, where these scoundrels used to torment their victims. They are of three kinds—one adjoining the place of trial, where the prisoners destined to immediate execution were kept. I could not descend into them, because the day on which I visited it was festa. Another under the leads of the palace, where the sufferers were roasted to death or madness by the ardours of an Italian sun: and others called the Pozzi—or wells, deep underneath, and communicating with those on the roof by secret passages—where the prisoners were confined sometimes half up to their middles in stinking water. When the French came here, they found only one old man in the dungeons, and he could not speak. But Venice, which was once a tyrant, is now the next worse thing, a slave; for in fact it ceased to be free or worth our regret as a nation, from the moment that the oligarchy usurped the rights of the people. Yet, I do not imagine that it was ever so degraded as it has been since the French, and especially the Austrian yoke. The Austrians take sixty per cent. in taxes, and impose free quarters on the inhabitants. A horde of German soldiers, as vicious and more disgusting than the Venetians themselves,

<sup>1</sup> From the gondolieri, who are in the habit of reciting from Tasso.

insult these miserable people. I had no conception of the excess to which avarice, cowardice, superstition, ignorance, passionless lust, and all the inexpressible brutalities which degrade human nature, could be carried, until I had passed a few days at Venice.

We have been living this last month near the little town from which I date this letter, in a very pleasant villa which has been lent to us, and we are now on the point of proceeding to Florence, Rome, and Naples—at which last city we shall spend the winter, and return northwards in the spring. Behind us here are the Euganean hills, not so beautiful as those of the *Bagni di Lucca*, with *Arquà*, where Petrarch's house and tomb are religiously preserved and visited. At the end of our garden is an extensive Gothic castle, now the habitation of owls and bats, where the Medici family resided before they came to Florence. We see before us the wide flat plains of Lombardy, in which we see the sun and moon rise and set, and the evening star, and all the golden magnificence of autumnal clouds. But I reserve wonder for Naples.

I have been writing—and indeed have just finished the first act of a lyric and classical drama, to be called "*Prometheus Unbound*."<sup>1</sup> Will you tell me what there is in Cicero

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<sup>1</sup> "*Prometheus Unbound* / A Lyrical Drama / In four acts / with other poems / By / Percy Bysshe Shelley / Audisne hæc, Amphiaræ, sub terram abdite ? / London / C. and J. Oller Vere Street Bond Street / 1820." The "other poems" in the volume comprise: *The Sensitive Plant*; *A Vision of the Sea*; *Ode to Heaven*; *An Exhortation*; *Ode to the West Wind*; *An Ode*, written October, 1819, before the Spaniards had recovered their Liberty; *The Cloud*; *To a Skylark*; *Ode to Liberty*. Mrs. Shelley says that the "*Prometheus*" was begun in the summer-house at *I Cappuccini* (see p. 624). "At last, when at Rome," she continues, "during a bright and beautiful spring, he gave up his whole time to the composition. The spot selected for his study was, as he mentions in his preface, the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla." On April 6, 1819, Shelley wrote to Peacock that he has just finished "*Prometheus*"; that is to say, the first three acts. The fourth act was an afterthought that occurred to him while at Florence in the autumn of 1819. This was completed by the end of December, and the book was published in the autumn of 1820.

about a drama supposed to have been written by Æschylus under this title.

I ought to say that I have just read Malthus in a French translation. Malthus is a very clever man, and the world would be a great gainer if it would seriously take his lessons into consideration, if it were capable of attending seriously to anything but mischief—but what on earth does he mean by some of his inferences?

Yours ever faithfully,

P. B. S.

I will write again from Rome and Florence—in better spirits, and to more agreeable purpose, I hope. You saw those beautiful stanzas in the fourth canto<sup>1</sup> about the Nymph Egeria. Well, I did not whisper a word<sup>2</sup> about nympholepsy:<sup>3</sup> I hope you acquit me—and I hope you will not carry delicacy so far as to let this suppress anything nympholeptic.

### 308. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK,

FERRARA,<sup>4</sup>

Nov[ember] 6, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

We left Este<sup>4</sup> yesterday on our journey towards Naples. The roads were particularly bad; we have, therefore, accomplished only two days' journey, of eighteen and twenty-four miles each, and you may imagine that our horses must be tolerably good ones, to drag our carriage,

<sup>1</sup> Of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," cxv-cxix.

<sup>2</sup> See note about Peacock's projected poem on p. 614.

<sup>3</sup> Professor Dowden says "the journal shows that the true dates of these letters should be Nov. 6 and 7. In Shelley's "Essays and Letters" they are printed as Nov. 8 and 9.

<sup>4</sup> On Oct. 12 Shelley, his wife, and William were in Venice, where Shelley paid several visits to Byron at the Mocenigo Palazzo on the Grand Canal, and Mrs. Shelley saw her friends, the Hoppners. After twelve days, on Oct. 24, they returned to Este, but on the 29th of that month Shelley was again in Venice with Allegra to deliver her over to Byron.

with five people and heavy luggage, through deep and clayey roads. The roads are, however, good during the rest of the way.

The country is flat, but intersected by lines of wood, trellised with vines, whose broad leaves are now stamped with the redness of their decay. Every here and there one sees people employed in agricultural labours, and the plough, the harrow, or the cart, drawn by long teams of milk-white or dove-coloured oxen of immense size and exquisite beauty. This, indeed, might be the country of Pasiphaes. In one farmyard I was shown sixty-three of these lovely oxen, tied to their stalls, in excellent condition. A farmyard in this part of Italy is somewhat different from one in England. First, the house, which is large and high, with strange-looking unpainted window-shutters, generally closed, and dreary beyond conception. The farmyard and out-buildings, however, are usually, in the neatest order. The threshing-floor is not under cover, but like that described in the *Georgics*, usually flattened by a broken column, and neither the mole, nor the toad, nor the ant, can find on its area a crevice for their dwelling. Around it, at this season, are piled the stacks of the leaves and stalks of Indian corn, which has lately been threshed and dried upon its surface. At a little distance are vast heaps of many-coloured zucche or pumpkins, some of enormous size, piled as winter food for the hogs. There are turkeys, too, and fowls wandering about, and two or three dogs, who bark with a sharp hylactism. The people who are occupied with the care of these things seem neither ill-clothed nor ill-fed, and the blunt incivility of their manners has an English air with it, very discouraging to those who are accustomed to the impudent and polished lying of the inhabitants of the cities. I should judge the agricultural resources of the country to be immense, since it can wear so flourishing an appearance, in spite of the enormous discouragements which the various tyranny of the governments inflicts on it. I ought to say that one of,

the farms belongs to a Jew banker at Venice, another Shylock.—We arrived late at the inn where I now write ; it was once the palace of a Venetian nobleman, and is now an excellent inn. To-morrow we are going to see the sights of Ferrara.

Nov[ember] 7.

We have had heavy rain and thunder all night ; and the former still continuing, we went in the carriage about the town. We went first to look at the cathedral, but the beggars very soon made us sound a retreat ; so, whether, as it is said, there is a copy of a picture of Michael Angelo there or no, I cannot tell. At the public library we were more successful. This is, indeed, a magnificent establishment, containing, as they say, 160,000 volumes. We saw some illuminated manuscripts of church music, with verses of the psalms interlined between the square notes, each of which consisted of the most delicate tracery, in colours inconceivably vivid. They belonged to the neighbouring convent of Certosa, and are three or four hundred years old ; but their hues are as fresh as if they had been executed yesterday. The tomb of Ariosto occupies one end of the largest saloon of which the library is composed ; it is formed of various marbles, surmounted by an expressive bust of the poet, and subscribed with a few Latin verses, in a less miserable taste than those usually employed for similar purposes. But the most interesting exhibitions here, are the writings, etc., of Ariosto and Tasso, which are preserved, and were concealed from the undistinguishing depredations of the French with pious care. There is the arm-chair of Ariosto, an old plain wooden piece of furniture, the hard seat of which was once occupied by, but has now survived its cushion, as it has its master. I could fancy Ariosto sitting in it ; and the satires in his own handwriting which they unfold beside it, and the old bronze inkstand, loaded with figures, which belonged also to him, assists

the willing delusion. This inkstand has an antique, rather than an ancient appearance. Three nymphs lean forth from the circumference, and on the top of the lid stands a cupid, winged and looking up, with a torch in one hand, his bow in the other, and his quiver beside him. A medal was bound round the skeleton of Ariosto, with his likeness impressed upon it. I cannot say I think it had much native expression; but, perhaps, the artist was in fault. On the reverse is a hand, cutting with a pair of scissors the tongue from a serpent, upraised from the grass, with this legend—*Pro bono malum*. What this reverse of the boasted Christian maxim means, or how it applies to Ariosto, either as a satirist or a serious writer, I cannot exactly tell. The cicerone attempted to explain, and it is to his commentary that my bewildering is probably due—if, indeed, the meaning be very plain, as is possibly the case.

There is here a manuscript of the entire “Gerusalemme Liberata,” written by Tasso’s own hand; a manuscript of some poems, written in prison, to the Duke Alfonso; and the satires of Ariosto, written also by his own hand; and the Pastor Fido of Guarini. The Gerusalemme, though it had evidently been copied and recopied, is interlined, particularly towards the end, with numerous corrections. The handwriting of Ariosto is a small, firm, and pointed character, expressing, as I should say, a strong and keen, but circumscribed energy of mind; that of Tasso is large, free, and flowing, except that there is a checked expression in the midst of its flow, which brings the letters into a smaller compass than one expected from the beginning of the word. It is the symbol of an intense and earnest mind, exceeding at times its own depth, and admonished to return by the chillness of the waters of oblivion striking upon its adventurous feet. You know I always seek in what I see the manifestation of something beyond the present and tangible object; and as we do not agree in physiognomy, so we may not agree now. But my business

is to relate my own sensations, and not to attempt to inspire others with them. Some of the MSS. of Tasso were sonnets to his persecutor, which contain a great deal of what is called flattery. If Alfonzo's ghost were asked how he felt those praises now, I wonder what he would say. But to me there is much more to pity than to condemn in these entreaties and praises of Tasso. It is as a bigot prays to and praises his god, whom he knows to be the most remorseless, capricious, and inflexible of tyrants, but whom he knows also to be omnipotent. Tasso's situation was widely different from that of any persecuted being of the present day; for, from the depth of dungeons, public opinion may now at length be awakened to an echo that would startle the oppressor. But then there was no hope. There is something irresistibly pathetic to me in the sight of Tasso's own handwriting, moulding expressions of adulation and entreaty to a deaf and stupid tyrant, in an age when the most heroic virtue would have exposed its possessor to hopeless persecution, and—such is the alliance between virtue and genius—which unoffending genius could not escape.

We went afterwards to see his prison in the hospital of Sant' Anna, and I enclose you a piece of the wood of the very door, which for seven years and three months divided this glorious being from the air and the light which had nourished in him those influences which he has communicated, through his poetry, to thousands. The dungeon is low and dark, and when I say that it is really a very decent dungeon, I speak as one who has seen the prisons in the doges' palace of Venice. But it is a horrible abode for the coarsest and meanest thing that ever wore the shape of man, much more for one of delicate susceptibilities and elevated fancies. It is low, and has a grated window, and being sunk some feet below the level of the earth, is full of unwholesome damps. In the darkest corner is a mark in the wall where the chains were riveted, which bound him hand and foot. After some time, at the instance



of some Cardinal, his friend, the Duke allowed his victim a fireplace ; the mark where it was walled up yet remains.

At the entrance of the Liceo, where the library is, we were met by a penitent ; his form was completely enveloped in a ghost-like drapery of white flannel ; his bare feet were sandalled ; and there was a kind of net-work visor drawn over his eyes, so as entirely to conceal his face. I imagine that this man had been adjudged to suffer this penance for some crime known only to himself and his confessor, and this kind of exhibition is a striking instance of the power of the Catholic superstition over the human mind. He passed, rattling his wooden box for charity.<sup>1</sup>

Adieu.—You will hear from me again before I arrive at Naples.

Yours, ever sincerely,

P. B. S.

### 309. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

BOLOGNA,

Monday, Nov[ember] 9, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I have seen a quantity of things here—churches, palaces, statues, fountains, and pictures ; and my brain is at this moment like a portfolio of an architect, or a print-shop, or a commonplace-book. I will try to recollect something of what I have seen ; for, indeed, it requires, if it will obey, an act of volition. First, we went to the cathedral, which contains nothing remarkable, except a kind of shrine, or rather a marble canopy, loaded with sculptures, and supported on four marble columns. We went then to a palace—I am sure I forget the name of it—where we saw a large gallery of pictures. Of course, in a picture gallery you see three hundred pictures you forget, for

<sup>1</sup> "These penitents ask alms, to be spent in masses for the souls in purgatory."—Mrs. Shelley's note.

one you remember. I remember, however, an interesting picture by Guido, of the Rape of Proserpine, in which Proserpine casts back her languid and half-unwilling eyes, as it were, to the flowers she had left ungathered in the fields of Enna. There was an exquisitely executed piece of Correggio, about four saints, one of whom seemed to have a pet dragon in a leash. I was told that it was the devil who was bound in that style—but who can make anything of four saints? For what can they be supposed to be about? There was one painting, indeed, by this master, Christ beatified, inexpressibly fine. It is a half figure, seated on a mass of clouds, tinged with an ethereal, rose-like lustre; the arms are expanded; the whole frame seems dilated with expression; the countenance is heavy, as it were, with the weight of the rapture of the spirit; the lips parted, but scarcely parted, with the breath of intense but regulated passion; the eyes are calm and benignant; the whole features harmonised in majesty and sweetness. The hair is parted on the forehead, and falls in heavy locks on each side. It is motionless, but seems as if the faintest breath would move it. The colouring, I suppose, must be very good, if I could remark and understand it. The sky is of pale ærial orange, like the tints of latest sunset; it does not seem painted around and beyond the figure, but everything seems to have absorbed, and to have been penetrated by its hues. I do not think we saw any other of Correggio, but this specimen gives me a very exalted idea of his powers.

We went to see heaven knows how many more palaces—Ranuzzi, Marriscalchi, Aldobrandi. If you want Italian names for any purpose, here they are; I should be glad of them if I was writing a novel. I saw many more of Guido. One, a Samson drinking water out of an ass's jaw-bone, in the midst of the slaughtered Philistines. Why he is supposed to do this, God, who gave him this jaw-bone, alone knows—but certain it is, that the painting is a very fine one. The figure of Samson stands in strong

relief in the foreground, coloured, as it were, in the hues of human life, and full of strength and elegance. Round him lie the Philistines in all the attitudes of death. One prone, with the slight convulsion of pain just passing from his forehead, whilst on his lips and chin death lies as heavy as sleep. Another leaning on his arm, with his hand, white and motionless, hanging out beyond. In the distance, more dead bodies; and, still further beyond, the blue sea and the blue mountains, and one white and tranquil sail.

There is a *Murder of the Innocents*, also, by Guido, finely coloured, with much fine expression—but the subject is very horrible, and it seemed deficient in strength—at least, you require the highest ideal energy, the most poetical and exalted conception of the subject, to reconcile you to such a contemplation. There was a *Jesus Christ crucified*, by the same, very fine. One gets tired, indeed, whatever may be the conception and execution of it, of seeing that monotonous and agonised form for ever exhibited in one prescriptive attitude of torture. But the *Magdalen*, clinging to the cross with the look of passive and gentle despair beaming from beneath her bright flaxen hair, and the figure of *St. John*, with his looks uplifted in passionate compassion; his hands clasped, and his fingers twisting themselves together, as it were, with involuntary anguish; his feet almost writhing up from the ground with the same sympathy; and the whole of this arrayed in colours of diviner nature, yet most like nature's self. Of the contemplation of this one would never weary.

There was a "*Fortune*," too, of Guido; a piece of mere beauty. There was the figure of *Fortune* on a globe, eagerly proceeding onwards, and *Love* was trying to catch her back by the hair, and her face was half turned towards him; her long chestnut hair was floating in the stream of the wind, and threw its shadow over her fair forehead. Her hazel eyes were fixed on her pursuer, with a meaning look of playfulness, and a light smile was hovering on her

lips. The colours which arrayed her delicate limbs were ethereal and warm.

But, perhaps, the most interesting of all the pictures of Guido which I saw was a *Madonna Lattante*. She is leaning over her child, and the maternal feelings with which she is pervaded are shadowed forth on her soft and gentle countenance, and in her simple and affectionate gestures—there is what an unfeeling observer would call a dulness in the expression of her face ; her eyes are almost closed ; her lip depressed ; there is a serious, and even a heavy relaxation, as it were, of all the muscles which are called into action by ordinary emotions : but it is only as if the spirit of love, almost insupportable from its intensity, were brooding over and weighing down the soul, or whatever it is, without which the material frame is inanimate and inexpressive.

There is another painter here, called Franceschini, a Bolognese, who, though certainly very inferior to Guido, is yet a person of excellent powers. One entire church, that of *Santa Catarina*, is covered by his works. I do not know whether any of his pictures have ever been seen in England. His colouring is less warm than that of Guido, but nothing can be more clear and delicate ; it is as if he could have dipped his pencil in the hues of some serene and star-shining twilight. His forms have the same delicacy and ærial loveliness ; their eyes are all bright with innocence and love ; their lips scarce divided by some gentle and sweet emotion. His winged children are the loveliest ideal beings ever created by the human mind. These are generally, whether in the capacity of *Cherubin* or *Cupid*, accessories to the rest of the picture ; and the underplot of their lovely and infantine play is something almost pathetic from the excess of its unpretending beauty. One of the best of his pieces is an *Annunciation* of the Virgin :—the Angel is beaming in beauty ; the Virgin, soft retiring, and simple.

We saw, besides, one picture of *Raphael*—*St. Cecilia* :

this is in another and higher style ; you forget that it is a picture as you look at it ; and yet it is most unlike any of those things which we call reality. It is of the inspired and ideal kind, and seems to have been conceived and executed in a similar state of feeling to that which produced among the ancients those perfect specimens of poetry and sculpture which are the baffling models of succeeding generations. There is a unity and a perfection in it of an incommunicable kind. The central figure, St. Cecilia, seems rapt in such inspiration as produced her image in the painter's mind ; her deep, dark, eloquent eyes lifted up ; her chestnut hair flung back from her forehead—she holds an organ in her hands—her countenance, as it were, calmed by the depth of its passion and rapture, and penetrated throughout with the warm and radiant light of life. She is listening to the music of heaven, and, as I imagine, has just ceased to sing, for the four figures that surround her evidently point, by their attitudes, towards her ; particularly St. John, who, with a tender yet impassioned gesture, bends his countenance towards her, languid with the depth of his emotion. At her feet lie various instruments of music, broken and unstrung. Of the colouring I do not speak ; it eclipses nature, yet it has all her truth and softness.

We saw some pictures of Domenichino, Caracci, Albano, Guercino, Elizabetta Sirani. The two former—remember, I do not pretend to taste—I cannot admire. Of the latter there are some beautiful Madonnas. There are several of Guercino, which they said were very fine. I dare say they were, for the strength and complication of his figures made my head turn round. One, indeed, was certainly powerful. It was the representation of the founder of the Carthusians exercising his austerities in the desert, with a youth as his attendant, kneeling beside him at an altar ; on another altar stood a skull and a crucifix ; and around were the rocks and the trees of the wilderness. I never saw such a figure as this fellow. His face was

wrinkled like a dried snake's skin, and drawn in long hard lines: his very hands were wrinkled. He looked like an animated mummy. He was clothed in a loose dress of death-coloured flannel, such as you might fancy a shroud might be, after it had wrapped a corpse a month or two. It had a yellow, putrified, ghastly hue, which it cast on all the objects around, so that the hands and face of the Carthusian and his companion were jaundiced by this sepulchral glimmer. Why write books against religion, when we may hang up such pictures? But the world either will not or cannot see. The gloomy effect of this was softened and, at the same time, its sublimity diminished, by the figure of the Virgin and Child in the sky, looking down with admiration on the monk, and a beautiful flying figure of an angel.

Enough of pictures. I saw the place where Guido and his mistress, Elizabetta Sirani, were buried. This lady was poisoned at the age of twenty-six, by another lover, a rejected one of course. Our guide said she was very ugly, and that we might see her portrait to-morrow.

Well, good-night, for the present. "To-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new."

November 10.

To-day we first went to see those divine pictures of Raffael and Guido again, and then rode up the mountains, behind this city, to visit a chapel dedicated to the Madonna. It made me melancholy to see that they had been varnishing and restoring some of these pictures, and that even some had been pierced by the French bayonets. These are symptoms of the mortality of man, and perhaps, few of his works are more evanescent than paintings. Sculpture retains its freshness for twenty centuries--the Apollo and the Venus are as they were. But books are perhaps the only productions of man coeval with the human race. Sophocles and Shakspeare can be produced and reproduced for ever. But how evanescent are paintings! and must

necessarily be. Those of Zeuxis and Apelles are no more ; and perhaps they bore the same relation to Homer and Æschylus that those of Guido and Raffael bear to Dante and Petrarch. There is one refuge from the despondency of this contemplation. The material part, indeed, of their works must perish, but they survive in the mind of man, and the remembrances connected with them are transmitted from generation to generation. The poet embodies them in his creations ; the systems of philosophers are modelled to gentleness by their contemplation ; opinion, that legislator, is infected with their influence ; men become better and wiser ; and the unseen seeds are perhaps thus sown which shall produce a plant more excellent even than that from which they fell. But all this might as well be said or thought at Marlow as Bologna.

The chapel of the Madonna is a very pretty Corinthian building—very beautiful indeed. It commands a fine view of these fertile plains, the many-folded Apennines, and the city. I have just returned from a moonlight walk through Bologna. It is a city of colonnades, and the effect of moonlight is strikingly picturesque. There are two towers here—one 400 feet high—ugly things, built of brick, which lean both different ways ; and with the delusion of moonlight shadows, you might almost fancy that the city is rocked by an earthquake. They say they were built so on purpose ; but I observe in all the plain of Lombardy the church towers lean.

Adieu.—God grant you patience to read this long letter, and courage to support the expectation of the next. Pray part them from the *Cabbetts* on your breakfast table—they may light it out in your mind.

Yours ever most sincerely,

P. B. S.

#### XIV. ROME AND NAPLES. "PROMETHEUS UNBOUND "

November 20, 1818—June 8, 1819

THE Journey to Rome—Spoleto—The Cataract of the Velino—At Naples—The *Quarterly Review*—"Childe Harold" and Byron—Impressions of Rome—The Coliseum—The Vatican—At Baia—Vesuvius—Pompeii—The Lago d'Agnano and the Caccia d'Ischia—Pesto—Pictures at Naples—Rome—The Baths of Caracalla—The Forum—St Peter's—The Pantheon—The Arch of Titus—Mrs. Boinville—Holy Week at Rome—"Prometheus Unbound"—Fettered Criminals—Death of William Shelley.

#### 310. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

ROME,

November 20, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

Behold me in the capital of the vanished world ! But I have seen nothing except St. Peter's and the Vatican, overlooking the city in the mist of distance, and the Dogana, where they took us to have our luggage examined, which is built between the ruins of a temple to Antoninus Pius. The Corinthian columns rise over the dwindled palaces of the modern town, and the wrought cornice is changed on one side, as it were, to masses of wave-worn precipices, which overhang you, far, far on high.

I take advantage of this rainy evening, and before Rome has effaced all other recollections, to endeavour to recall the vanished scenes through which we have passed. We left Bologna, I forget on what day, and passing by Rimini, Fano, and Foligno, along the Via Flaminia and Terni,



have arrived at Rome after ten days' somewhat tedious, but most interesting journey. The most remarkable things we saw were the Roman excavations in the rock, and the great waterfall of Terni. Of course you have heard that there are a Roman bridge and a triumphal arch at Rimini, and in what excellent taste they are built. The bridge is not unlike the Strand bridge,<sup>1</sup> but more bold in proportion, and of course infinitely smaller. From Fano we left the coast of the Adriatic, and entered the Apennines, following the course of the Metaurus, the banks of which were the scene of the defeat of Asdrubal: and it is said (you can refer to the book) that Livy has given a very exact and animated description of it. I forget all about it, but shall look as soon as our boxes are opened. Following the river the vale contracts, the banks of the river become steep and rocky, the forests of oak and ilex which overhang its emerald-coloured stream, cling to their abrupt precipices. About four miles from Fossombrone, the river forces for itself a passage between the walls and toppling precipices of the loftiest Apennines, which are here rifted to their base, and undermined by the narrow and tumultuous torrent. It was a cloudy morning, and we had no conception of the scene that awaited us. Suddenly the low clouds were struck by the clear north wind, and like curtains of the finest gauze, removed one by one, were drawn from before the mountain, whose heaven-cleaving pinnacles and black crags overhanging one another, stood at length defined in the light of the day. The road runs parallel to the river, at a considerable height, and is carried through the mountain by a vaulted cavern. The marks of the chisel of the legionaries of the Roman Consul are yet evident.

We passed on day after day, until we came to Spoleto, I think the most romantic city I ever saw. There is here an aqueduct of astonishing elevation, which unites two

<sup>1</sup> Now known as Waterloo Bridge.

rocky mountains—there is the path of a torrent below, whitening the green dell with its broad and barren track of stones, and above there is a castle, apparently of great strength and of tremendous magnitude, which overhangs the city, and whose marble bastions are perpendicular with the precipice. I never saw a more impressive picture ; in which the shapes of nature are of the grandest order, but over which the creations of man sublime from their antiquity and greatness, seem to predominate. The castle was built by Belisarius or Narses, I forget which, but was of that epoch.

From Spoleto we went to Terni, and saw the cataract of the Velino. The glaciers of Montanvert and the source of the Arveiron is the grandest spectacle I ever saw. This is the second. Imagine a river sixty feet in breadth, with a vast volume of waters, the outlet of a great lake among the higher mountains, falling 300 feet into a sightless gulf of snow-white vapour, which bursts up for ever and for ever, from a circle of black crags, and thence leaping downwards, made five or six other cataracts, each fifty or a hundred feet high, which exhibit, on a smaller scale, and with beautiful and sublime variety, the same appearances. But words (and far less could painting) will not express it. Stand upon the brink of the platform of cliff, which is directly opposite. You see the ever-moving water stream down. It comes in thick and tawny folds, flaking off like solid snow gliding down a mountain. It does not seem hollow within, but without it is unequal, like the folding of linen thrown carelessly down ; your eye follows it, and it is lost below ; not in the black rocks which gird it around, but in its own foam and spray, in the cloud-like vapours boiling up from below, which is not like rain, nor mist, nor spray, nor foam, but water, in a shape wholly unlike anything I ever saw before. It is as white as snow, but thick and impenetrable to the eye. The very imagination is bewildered in it. A thunder comes up from the abyss wonderful to hear ; for, though it

ever sounds, it is never the same, but, modulated by the changing motion, rises and falls intermittingly ; we passed half-an-hour in one spot looking at it, and thought but a few minutes had gone by. The surrounding scenery is, in its kind, the loveliest and most sublime that can be conceived. In our first walk we passed through some olive groves, of large and ancient trees, whose hoary and twisted trunks leaned in all directions. We then crossed a path of orange trees by the river side, laden with their golden fruit, and came to a forest of ilex of a large size, whose evergreen and acorn-bearing boughs were intertwined over our winding path. Around, hemming in the narrow vale, were pinnacles of lofty mountains of pyramidal rock clothed with all evergreen plants and trees ; the vast pine, whose feather foliage trembled in the blue air, the ilex, that ancestral inhabitant of these mountains, the arbutus with its crimson-coloured fruit and glittering leaves. After an hour's walk, we came beneath the cataract of Terni, within the distance of half a mile ; nearer you cannot approach, for the Nar, which has here its confluence with the Velino, bars the passage. We then crossed the river formed by this confluence, over a narrow natural bridge of rock, and saw the cataract from the platform I first mentioned. We think of spending some time next year near this waterfall. The inn is very bad, or we should have stayed there longer.

We came from Terni last night to a place called Nepi, and to-day arrived at Rome across the much-belied Campagna di Roma, a place I confess infinitely to my taste. It is a flattering picture of Bagshot Heath. But then there are the Apennines on one side, and Rome and St. Peter's on the other, and it is intersected by perpetual dells clothed with arbutus and ilex.

Adieu—very faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

311. TO LEIGH HUNT  
(London)NAPLES,<sup>1</sup>

December 22, 1818.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

A letter from you is always so pleasant that one never feels less inclined to complain of the long absence of such a pleasure than at the moment when it is conferred. Neither Ollier's parcel nor any of the letters it contains have arrived. I do confess we had been saying now and then, "Well, this is just like Hunt"—as indeed it was a little, but we never attributed your silence to neglect or want of affection. You don't tell me if your book is published yet, or is about to be published soon. As to my little poem,<sup>2</sup> I can only lament that it is not more worthy of the lady whose name it bears; though it may derive, it cannot confer, honour on the situation where you have placed it.

I saw the *Quarterly* at Venice, and was much pleased with the Review of "Frankenstein" though it distorts the story. As to what relates to yourself and me, it makes me melancholy to consider the dreadful wickedness

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley left Rome on Nov. 27, a day in advance of Mary and Clare, and proceeded to Naples, where he arrived two days later.

"Our winter was spent at Naples," says Mrs. Shelley. "Here he wrote the fragments of 'Marengi' and 'The Woodman and the Nightingale,' which he afterwards threw aside. [Also 'Stanzas written in Dejection, near Naples.'] At this time Shelley suffered greatly in health. He put himself under the care of a medical man, who promised great things, and made him endure severe bodily pain, without any good results. Constant and poignant physical suffering exhausted him; and though he preserved the appearance of cheerfulness, and often greatly enjoyed our wanderings in the environs of Naples and our excursions on its sunny sea, yet many hours were passed when his thoughts shadowed by illness, became gloomy, and then he escaped to solitude, and in verses which he hid from fear of wounding me, poured forth morbid but too natural bursts of discontent and sadness. . . . We lived in utter solitude."

—Note to the Poems of 1818.

<sup>2</sup> "Marianne's Dream"

of heart which could have prompted such expressions as those with which the anonymous writer exults over my domestic calamities, and the perversion of understanding, with which he paints your character. There can be no doubt with respect to me, that personal hatred is intermingled with the rage of faction. I know that Southey on one occasion said to a friend of his that he on his own knowledge knew me to be the *blackest of villains*. When we consider *who* makes this accusation, and against *whom* I need only rebut such an accusation by silence and a smile. I thought, indeed, of writing to Southey; but that, as he is really guilty, would have only exposed me to misrepresentation, and I shall on my return seek an opportunity of expostulating with him in person, and enquiring by what injury I have awakened in his heart such dreadful hatred; and if, indeed, I have injured him unintentionally, to endeavour to repair it; and if not, to require that he should produce his proof of my meriting the appellation he employs. As far as the public is concerned, it is not for him whom Southey accuses, but for him whom all the wise and good among his contemporaries accuse of delinquency to all public faith and honour, to defend himself. Besides, I never will be a party in making my private affairs or those of others to be topics of general discussion. Who can know them but the actors? And if they have erred, or often when they have not erred, is there not pain enough to punish them? My public character as a writer of verses—as a speculator on politics, or morals, or religion—as the adherent of any party or cause—is public property; and my good faith or ill faith in conducting these, my talent, my penetration, or my stupidity, are all subjects of criticism. I am almost certain that Southey, not Gifford, wrote that criticism on your poems. I never saw Gifford in my life, and it is impossible that he should have taken a personal hatred to me. Gifford is a bitter partisan, and has a very muddled head; but I hear from those who know him that he is rather a mild man personally, and I

don't know that he has ever changed sides. So much for myself. As far as you are concerned, I can imagine why Southey should dislike you, as the *Examiner* has been the crown of thorns worn by this unredeemed Redeemer for many years.

Do you ever see Peacock ? He will tell you all about where we go, what we do or see ; and, as I wrote him an account of these things, I do not like writing twice over the same things. There are *two* Italies—one composed of the green earth and transparent sea, and the mighty ruins of ancient time, and ærial mountains, and the warm and radiant atmosphere which is interfused through all things. The other consists of the Italians of the present day, their works and ways. The one is the most sublime and lovely contemplation that can be conceived by the imagination of man ; the other is the most degraded, disgusting, and odious. What do you think ? Young women of rank actually eat—you will never guess what—*garlick* ! Our poor friend Lord Byron is quite corrupted by living among these people, and, in fact, is going on in a way not very worthy of him. We talked a good deal about you, and among other things he said that he wished you would come to Italy, and bade me tell you that he would lend you the money for the journey (£400 or £500) if you were prevented by that consideration. Pray could you not make it in some way even profitable to visit this astonishing country ? We return to Venice next Spring. What an inexpressible pleasure it would give us to meet you there ! I fear (if you will allow me to touch on so delicate a subject) it would be hardly possible for you to bring *all* your family, but you would know best. I should not wonder if Peacock would join you, and then the ensuing Spring we would all return together. Italy has the advantage of being exceeding cheap, when you are once there ; particularly if you go to market yourself, otherwise the cheating makes it approach English prices. If you are indifferent as to seeing

France, you may sail from London to Livorno, and we would meet then a month earlier than at Venice. I don't think you need feel at all uncomfortable at accepting Lord Byron's offer (if *I could* make it, you know that I would not give you this advice) as 'twas very frankly made, and it would not only give him great pleasure, but might do him great service, to have your society. Write to me quickly what you think of this plan, on which my imagination delights itself.

Mine and Mary's love to Marianne and Miss K[ent] and all the little ones. Now pray write directly, addressed as usual to Livorno, because I shall be in a fever until I know whether you are coming or no. I ought to say I have neither good health or good spirits just now, and that your visit would be a relief to both.

Most affectionately and sincerely your friend,

P. B. S.

Ollier has orders to pay Marianne £5. I owe her part of it, and with the other I wish her to pay £1 10s. 0d. to the tailor who made my habit if he calls for it. His charge will be more, but do not pay it him.

[Addressed outside],

LEIGH HUNT, Esq.,  
8 York Buildings,  
New Road,  
London.

Inghilterra.

### 312. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

NAPLES,

December 22, 1818.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I have received a letter from you here, dated November 1st; you see the reciprocation of letters from the term of our travels is more slow. I entirely agree with what you say about "Childe Harold." The spirit in which it is written is, if insane, the most wicked and mischievous

insanity that ever was given forth. It is a kind of obstinate and self-willed folly, in which he hardens himself. I remonstrated with him in vain on the tone of mind from which such a view of things alone arises. For its real root is very different from its apparent one. Nothing can be less sublime than the true source of these expressions of contempt and desperation. The fact is, that first, the Italian women with whom he associates are perhaps the most contemptible of all who exist under the moon—the most ignorant, the most disgusting, the most bigoted ; countesses smell so strongly of garlick that an ordinary Englishman cannot approach them. Well, L. B. is familiar with the lowest sort of these women, the people his gondolieri pick up in the streets. He associates with wretches who seem almost to have lost the gait and physiognomy of man, and who do not scruple to avow practices which are not only not named, but I believe seldom even conceived in England. He says he disapproves, but he endures. He is heartily and deeply discontented with himself ; and contemplating in the distorted mirror of his own thoughts the nature and the destiny of man, what can he behold but objects of contempt and despair ? But that he is a great poet, I think the address to ocean proves. And he has a certain degree of candour while you talk to him, but unfortunately it does not outlast your departure. No, I do not doubt, and, for his sake, I ought to hope, that his present career must end soon in some violent circumstance.

Since I last wrote to you, I have seen the ruins of Rome, the Vatican, St. Peter's, and all the miracles of ancient and modern art contained in that majestic city. The impression of it exceeds anything I have ever experienced in my travels. We stayed there only a week, intending to return at the end of February, and devote two or three months to its mines of inexhaustible contemplation, to which period I refer you for a minute account of it. We visited the Forum and the ruins of the Coliseum every day. The Coliseum is unlike any work of human hands I ever saw



before. It is of enormous height and circuit, and the arches built of massy stones are piled on one another, and jut into the blue air, shattered into the forms of overhanging rocks. It has been changed by time into the image of an amphitheatre of rocky hills overgrown by the wild olive, the myrtle, and the fig-tree, and threaded by little paths, which wind among its ruined stairs and immeasurable galleries: the copsewood overshadows you as you wander through its labyrinths, and the wild weeds of this climate of flowers bloom under your feet. The arena is covered with grass, and pierces like the skirts of a natural plain, the chasms of the broken arches around. But a small part of the exterior circumference remains—it is exquisitely light and beautiful; and the effect of the perfection of its architecture, adorned with ranges of Corinthian pilasters, supporting a bold cornice, is such as to diminish the effect of its greatness. The interior is all ruin. I can scarcely believe that when encrusted with Dorian marble and ornamented by columns of Egyptian granite, its effect could have been so sublime and so impressive as in its present state. It is open to the sky, and it was the clear and sunny weather of the end of November in this climate when we visited it, day after day.

Near it is the arch of Constantine, or rather the arch of Trajan; for the servile and avaricious senate of degraded Rome ordered that the monument of his predecessor should be demolished in order to dedicate one to the Christian reptile, who had crept among the blood of his murdered family to the supreme power. It is exquisitely beautiful and perfect. The Forum is a plain in the midst of Rome, a kind of desert full of heaps of stones and pits; and though so near the habitations of men, is the most desolate place you can conceive. The ruins of temples stand in and around it, shattered columns and ranges of others complete, supporting cornices of exquisite workmanship, and vast vaults of shattered domes distinct with regular compartments, once filled with sculptures of ivory or brass.

The temples of Jupiter, and Concord, and Peace, and the Sun, and the Moon, and Vesta, are all within a short distance of this spot. Behold the wrecks of what a great nation once dedicated to the abstractions of the mind ! Rome is a city, as it were, of the dead, or rather of those who cannot die, and who survive the puny generations which inhabit and pass over the spot which they have made sacred to eternity. In Rome, at least in the first enthusiasm of your recognition of ancient time, you see nothing of the Italians. The nature of the city assists the delusion, for its vast and antique walls describe a circumference of sixteen miles, and thus the population is thinly scattered over this space, nearly as great as London. Wide wild fields are enclosed within it, and there are grassy lanes and copses winding among the ruins, and a great green hill, lonely and bare, which overhangs the Tiber. The gardens of the modern palaces are like wild woods of cedar, and cypress, and pine, and the neglected walks are overgrown with weeds. The English burying-place is a green slope near the walls, under the pyramidal tomb of Cestius, and is, I think, the most beautiful and solemn cemetery I ever beheld. To see the sun shining on its bright grass, fresh, when we first visited it, with the autumnal dews, and hear the whispering of the wind among the leaves of the trees which have overgrown the tomb of Cestius, and the soil which is stirring in the sun-warm earth, and to mark the tombs, mostly of women and young people who were buried there, one might, if one were to die, desire the sleep they seem to sleep. Such is the human mind, and so it peoples with its wishes vacancy and oblivion.

I have told you little about Rome ; but I reserve the Pantheon, and St. Peter's, and the Vatican, and Raffael, for my return. About a fortnight ago I left Rome, and Mary and Clare followed in three days, for it was necessary to procure lodgings here without alighting at an inn. From my peculiar mode of travelling I saw little of the country,

but could just observe that the wild beauty of the scenery and the barbarous ferocity of the inhabitants progressively increased. On entering Naples, the first circumstance that engaged my attention was an assassination. A youth ran out of a shop, pursued by a woman with a bludgeon, and a man armed with a knife. The man overtook him, and with one blow in the neck laid him dead in the road. On my expressing the emotions of horror and indignation which I felt, a Calabrian priest, who travelled with me, laughed heartily, and attempted to quiz me, as what the English call a flat. I never felt such an inclination to beat any one. Heaven knows I have little power, but he saw that I looked extremely displeased, and was silent. This same man, a fellow of gigantic strength and stature, had expressed the most frantic terror of robbers on the road ; he cried at the sight of my pistol, and it had been with great difficulty that the joint exertions of myself and the vetturino had quieted his hysterics.

But external nature in these delightful regions contrasts with and compensates for the deformity and degradation of humanity. We have a lodging divided from the sea by the royal gardens, and from our windows we see perpetually the blue waters of the bay, forever changing, yet forever the same, and encompassed by the mountainous island of Capreaë, the lofty peaks which overhang Salerno, and the woody hill of Posilipo, whose promontories hide from us Misenum and the lofty isle Inarime,<sup>1</sup> which, with its divided summit, forms the opposite horn of the bay. From the pleasant walks of the garden we see Vesuvius ; a smoke by day and a fire by night is seen upon its summit, and the glassy sea often reflects its light or shadow. The climate is delicious. We sit without a fire, with the windows open, and have almost all the productions of an English summer. The weather is usually like what Wordsworth calls " the first fine day of March ; "

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<sup>1</sup> " The ancient name of Ischia."—Mrs. Shelley's note.

sometimes very much warmer, though perhaps it wants that "each minute sweeter than before," which gives an intoxicating sweetness to the awakening of the earth from its winter's sleep in England. We have made two excursions, one to Baïæ and one to Vesuvius, and we propose to visit, successively, the islands, Pæstum, Pompeii, and Beneventum.<sup>1</sup>

We set off an hour after sunrise one radiant morning in a little boat; there was not a cloud in the sky, nor a wave upon the sea, which was so translucent that you could see the hollow caverns clothed with the glaucous sea-moss, and the leaves and branches of those delicate weeds that pave the unequal bottom of the water. As noon approached, the heat, and especially the light, became intense. We passed Posilipo, and came first to the eastern point of the bay of Puzzoli<sup>2</sup>, which is within the great bay of Naples, and which again incloses that of Baïæ. Here are lofty rocks and craggy islets, with arches and portals of precipice standing in the sea, and enormous caverns, which echoed faintly with the murmur of the languid tide. This is called *La Scuola di Virgilio*. We then went directly across to the promontory of Misenum, leaving the precipitous island of Nesida on the right. Here we were conducted to see the *Mare Morto*, and the *Elysian fields*; the spot on which Virgil places the scenery of the Sixth *Æneid*. Though extremely beautiful, as a lake, and woody hills, and this divine sky must make it, I confess my disappointment. The guide showed us an antique cemetery, where the niches used for placing the cinerary urns of the dead yet remain. We then coasted the bay of Baïæ to the left, in which we saw many picturesque and interesting ruins; but I have to remark that we never disembarked but we were disappointed—while from the boat the effect of the scenery was inexpressibly delightful. The colours of the

<sup>1</sup> The date of the excursion to Baïæ was Dec. 8, that of Vesuvius Dec. 16; and Pompeii was visited on Dec. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Pozzoli on p. 656.

water and the air breathe over all things here the radiance of their own beauty. After passing the bay of Baiæ, and observing the ruins of its antique grandeur standing like rocks in the transparent sea under our boat, we landed to visit lake Avernus. We passed through the cavern of the Sibyl (not Virgil's Sybil) which pierces one of the hills which circumscribe the lake, and came to a calm and lovely basin of water, surrounded by dark woody hills, and profoundly solitary. Some vast ruins of the temple of Pluto stand on a lawny hill on one side of it, and are reflected in its windless mirror. It is far more beautiful than the Elysian fields—but there are all the materials for beauty in the latter, and the Avernus was once a chasm of deadly and pestilential vapours. About half a mile from Avernus, a high hill, called Monte Nuovo, was thrown up by volcanic fire.

Passing onward we came to Pozzoli, the ancient Dicæarchea, where there are the columns remaining of a temple to Serapis, and the wreck of an enormous amphitheatre, changed, like the Coliseum, into a natural hill of<sup>1</sup> the overteeming vegetation. Here also is the Solfatara, of which there is a poetical description in the Civil War of Petronius, beginning—"Est locus," and in which the verses of the poet are infinitely finer than what he describes, for it is not a very curious place. After seeing these things we returned by moonlight to Naples in our boat. What colours there were in the sky, what radiance in the evening star, and how the moon was encompassed by a light unknown to our regions!

Our next excursion was to Vesuvius. We went to Resina in a carriage, where Mary and I mounted mules, and Clare was carried in a chair on the shoulders of four men, much like a member of parliament after he has gained his election, and looking, with less reason, quite as frightened. So we arrived at the hermitage of San

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Buxton Forman suggests that this should read "by the overteeming vegetation."

Salvador, where an old hermit, belted with rope, set forth the plates for our refreshment.

Vesuvius is, after the glaciers, the most impressive exhibition of the energies of nature I ever saw. It has not the immeasurable greatness, the overpowering magnificence, nor, above all, the radiant beauty of the glaciers; but it has all their character of tremendous and irresistible strength. From Resina to the hermitage you wind up the mountain, and cross a vast stream of hardened lava, which is an actual image of the waves of the sea, changed into hard black stone by enchantment. The lines of the boiling flood seem to hang in the air, and it is difficult to believe that the billows which seem hurrying down upon you are not actually in motion. This plain was once a sea of liquid fire. From the hermitage we crossed another vast stream of lava, and then went on foot up the cone—this is the only part of the ascent in which there is any difficulty, and that difficulty has been much exaggerated. It is composed of rocks of lava, and declivities of ashes; by ascending the former and descending the latter, there is very little fatigue. On the summit is a kind of irregular plain, the most horrible chaos that can be imagined; riven into ghastly chasms, and heaped up with tumuli of great stones and cinders, and enormous rocks blackened and calcined, which had been thrown from the volcano upon one another in terrible confusion. In the midst stands the conical hill from which volumes of smoke, and the fountains of liquid fire, are rolled forth forever. The mountain is at present in a slight state of eruption; and a thick heavy white smoke is perpetually rolled out, interrupted by enormous columns of an impenetrable black bituminous vapour, which is hurled up, fold after fold, into the sky with a deep hollow sound, and fiery stones are rained down from its darkness, and a black shower of ashes fell even where we sat. The lava, like the glacier, creeps on perpetually, with a crackling sound as of suppressed fire. There are several springs of lava; and in

one place it rushes precipitously over a high crag, rolling down the half-molten rocks and its own overhanging waves; a cataract of quivering fire. We approached the extremity of one of these rivers of lava; it is about twenty feet in breadth and ten in height; and as the inclined plane was not rapid, its motion was very slow. We saw the masses of its dark exterior surface detach themselves as it moved, and betray the depth of the liquid flame. In the day the fire is but slightly seen; you only observe a tremulous motion in the air, and streams and fountains of white sulphurous smoke.

At length we saw the sun sink between Capreae and Inarime, and, as the darkness increased, the effect of the fire became more beautiful. We were, as it were, surrounded by streams and cataracts of the red and radiant fire; and in the midst, from the column of bituminous smoke shot up into the air, fell the vast masses of rock, white with the light of their intense heat, leaving behind them through the dark vapour trains of splendour. We descended by torch-light, and I should have enjoyed the scenery on my return, but they conducted me, I know not how, to the hermitage in a state of intense bodily suffering, the worst effect of which was spoiling the pleasure of Mary and Clare. Our guides on the occasion were complete savages. You have no idea of the horrible cries which they suddenly utter, no one knows why; the clamour, the vociferation, the tumult. Clare in her palanquin suffered most from it; and when I had gone on before, they threatened to leave her in the middle of the road, which they would have done had not my Italian servant promised them a beating, after which they became quiet. Nothing, however, can be more picturesque than the gestures and the physiognomies of these savage people. And when, in the darkness of night, they unexpectedly begin to sing in chorus some fragments of their wild but sweet national music, the effect is exceedingly fine.

Since I wrote this, I have seen the museum of this city.

Such statues ! There is a Venus ; an ideal shape of the most winning loveliness. A Bacchus, more sublime than any living being. A Satyr, making love to a youth : in which the expressed life of the sculpture, and the inconceivable beauty of the form of the youth, overcome one's repugnance to the subject. There are multitudes of wonderfully fine statues found in Herculaneum and Pompeii. We are going to see Pompeii the first day that the sea is waveless. Herculaneum is almost filled up ; no more excavations are made ; the king bought the ground and built a palace upon it.

You don't see much of Hunt. I wish you could contrive to see him when you go to town, and ask him what he means to answer to Lord Byron's invitation. He has now an opportunity, if he likes, of seeing Italy. What do you think of joining his party, and paying us a visit next year ; I mean as soon as the reign of winter is dissolved ? Write to me your thoughts upon this. I cannot express to you the pleasure it would give me to welcome such a party.

I have depression enough of spirits and not good health, though I believe the warm air of Naples does me good. We see absolutely no one here.

Adieu, my dear Peacock,

Affectionately your friend,

P. B. S.

### 313. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

NAPLES,

Jan[uary] 26th, 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

Your two letters arrived within a few days of each other, one being directed to Naples, and the other to Livorno. They are more welcome visitors to me than mine can be to you. I writing as from sepulchres, you from the habitations of men yet unburied ; though the sexton, Castle-ragh, after having dug their grave, stands with his spade



in his hand, evidently doubting whether he will not be forced to occupy it himself. Your news about the bank-note trials is excellent good. Do I not recognise in it the influence of Cobbett? You don't tell me what occupies Parliament. I know you will laugh at my demand, and assure me that it is indifferent. Your pamphlet I want exceedingly to see. Your calculations in the letter are clear, but require much oral explanation. You know I am an infernal arithmetician. If none but me had contemplated "*lucentemque globum lunæ, Titaniaque astra,*" the world would yet have doubted whether they were many hundred feet higher than the mountain tops.

In my accounts of pictures, I am more pleased to interest you than the many; and this is fortunate, because, in the first place, I have no idea of attempting the latter, and if I did attempt it, I should assuredly fail. A perception of the beautiful characterises those who differ from ordinary men, and those who can perceive it would not buy enough to pay the printer. Besides, I keep no journal, and the only records of my voyage will be the letters I send you. The bodily fatigue of standing for hours in galleries exhausts me; I believe that I don't see half that I ought, on that account. And then we know nobody; and the common Italians are so sullen and stupid, it's impossible to get information from them. At Rome, where the people seem superior to any in Italy, I cannot fail to stumble on something more. O, if I had health, and strength, and equal spirits, what boundless intellectual improvement might I not gather in this wonderful country! At present I write little else but poetry, and little of that. My first act of "*Prometheus*" is complete, and I think you would like it. I consider poetry very subordinate to moral and political science, and if I were well, certainly I would aspire to the latter; for I can conceive a great work, embodying the discoveries of all ages, and harmonising the contending creeds by which mankind have been ruled. Far from me is such an attempt, and I shall be

content, by exercising my fancy, to amuse myself, and perhaps some others, and cast what weight I can into the scale of that balance, which the Giant of Arthegall holds.<sup>1</sup>

Since you last heard from me, we have been to see Pompeii, and are waiting now for the return of spring weather, to visit, first, Pæstum, and then the islands; after which we shall return to Rome. I was astonished at the remains of this city; I had no conception of anything so perfect yet remaining. My idea of the mode of its destruction was this:—First, an earthquake shattered it, and unroofed almost all its temples, and split its columns; then a rain of light small pumice-stones fell; then torrents of boiling water, mixed with ashes, filled up all its crevices. A wide, flat hill, from which the city was excavated, is now covered by thick woods, and you see the tombs and the theatres, the temples and the houses, surrounded by the uninhabited wilderness. We entered the town from the side towards the sea, and first saw two theatres; one more magnificent than the other, strewn with the ruins of the white marble which formed their seats and cornices, wrought with deep, bold sculpture. In the front, between the stage and the seats, is the circular space, occasionally occupied by the chorus. The stage is very narrow, but long, and divided from this space by a narrow enclosure parallel to it, I suppose for the orchestra. On each side

<sup>1</sup> Peacock adds the following note in explanation of this passage. "The allusion is to the 'Fairy Queen,' Book V, canto 3. The Giant has scales, in which he professes to weigh right and wrong, and rectify the physical and moral evils which result from inequality of condition. Shelley once pointed out this passage to me, observing, 'Artegall argues with the Giant; the Giant has the best of the argument; Artegall's iron man knocks him over into the sea and drowns him. This is the usual way in which power deals with opinion.' I said, 'That was not the lesson Spenser intended to convey.' 'Perhaps not,' he said, 'it is the lesson which he conveys to me. I am of the Giant's faction.' In the same feeling with respect to Thomson's 'Castle of Indolence,' he held that the Enchanter in the first canto was a true philanthropist, and the Knight of Arts and Industry in the second an oligarchical impostor overthrowing truth by power."—*Fraser's Magazine*, March, 1860, p. 319.

are the consuls' boxes, and below, in the theatre at Herculaneum, were found two equestrian statues of admirable workmanship, occupying the same place as the great bronze lamps did at Drury Lane. The smallest of the theatres is said to have been comic, though I should doubt. From both you see, as you sit on the seats, a prospect of the most wonderful beauty.

You then pass through the ancient streets ; they are very narrow, and the houses rather small, but all constructed on an admirable plan, especially for this climate. The rooms are built round a court, or sometimes two, according to the extent of the house. In the midst is a fountain, sometimes surrounded with a portico, supported on fluted columns of white stucco ; the floor is paved with mosaic, sometimes wrought in imitation of vine leaves, sometimes in quaint figures, and more or less beautiful, according to the rank of the inhabitant. There were paintings on all, but most of them have been removed to decorate the royal museums. Little winged figures, and small ornaments of exquisite elegance, yet remain. There is an ideal life in the forms of these paintings of an incomparable loveliness, though most are evidently the work of very inferior artists. It seems as if, from the atmosphere of mental beauty which surrounded them, every human being caught a splendour not his own. In one house you see how the bed-rooms were managed ;—a small sofa was built up, where the cushions were placed ; two pictures, one representing Diana and Endymion, the other Venus and Mars, decorate the chamber ; and a little niche, which contains the statue of a domestic god. The floor is composed of a rich mosaic of the rarest marbles, agate, jasper, and porphyry ; it looks to the marble fountain and the snow-white columns, whose entablatures strew the floor of the portico they supported. The houses have only one storey, and the apartments, though not large, are very lofty. A great advantage results from this, wholly unknown in our cities. The public buildings.


whose ruins are now forests, as it were, of white fluted columns, and which then supported entablatures, loaded with sculptures, were seen on all sides over the roofs of the houses. This was the excellence of the ancients. Their private expenses were comparatively moderate; the dwelling of one of the chief senators of Pompeii is elegant indeed, and adorned with most beautiful specimens of art, but small. But their public buildings are everywhere marked by the bold and grand designs of an unsparing magnificence. In the little town of Pompeii (it contained about twenty thousand inhabitants), it is wonderful to see the number and the grandeur of their public buildings. Another advantage, too, is that, in the present case, the glorious scenery around is not shut out, and that, unlike the inhabitants of the Cimmerian ravines of modern cities, the ancient Pompeians could contemplate the clouds and the lamps of heaven; could see the moon rise high behind Vesuvius, and the sun set in the sea, tremulous with an atmosphere of golden vapour, between Inarime and Misenum.

We next saw the temples. Of the temple of Æsculapius little remains but an altar of black stone, adorned with a cornice imitating the scales of a serpent. His statue, in terra-cotta, was found in the cell. The temple of Isis is more perfect. It is surrounded by a portico of fluted columns, and in the area around it are two altars, and many ceppi for statues; and a little chapel of white stucco, as hard as stone, of the most exquisite proportion; its panels are adorned with figures in bas-relief, slightly indicated, but of a workmanship the most delicate and perfect that can be conceived. They are Egyptian subjects, executed by a Greek artist, who has harmonized all the unnatural extravagances of the original conception into the supernatural loveliness of his country's genius. They scarcely touch the ground with their feet, and their wind-uplifted robes seem in the place of wings. The temple in the midst raised on a high platform, and

approached by steps, was decorated with exquisite paintings, some of which we saw in the museum at Portici. It is small, of the same materials as the chapel, with a pavement of mosaic, and fluted Ionic columns of white stucco, so white that it dazzles you to look at it.

Thence through the other porticos and labyrinths of walls and columns (for I cannot hope to detail everything to you), we came to the Forum. This is a large square, surrounded by lofty porticos of fluted columns, some broken, some entire, their entablatures strewn under them. The temple of Jupiter, of Venus, and another temple, the Tribunal, and the Hall of Public Justice, with their forests of lofty columns, surround the Forum. Two pedestals or altars of an enormous size (for, whether they supported equestrian statues, or were the altars of the temple of Venus, before which they stand, the guide could not tell), occupy the lower end of the Forum. At the upper end, supported on an elevated platform, stands the temple of Jupiter. Under the colonnade of its portico we sat, and pulled out our oranges, and figs, and bread, and medlars (sorry fare, you will say), and rested to eat. Here was a magnificent spectacle. Above and between the multitudinous shafts of the sun-shining columns was seen the sea, reflecting the purple heaven of noon above it, and supporting, as it were, on its line the dark lofty mountains of Sorrento, of a blue inexpressibly deep, and tinged towards their summits with streaks of new-fallen snow. Between was one small green island. To the right was Capreae, Inarime, Prochyta, and Misenum. Behind was the single summit of Vesuvius, rolling forth volumes of thick white smoke, whose foam-like column was sometimes darted into the clear dark sky, and fell in little streaks along the wind. Between Vesuvius and the nearer mountains, as through a chasm, was seen the main line of the loftiest Apennines, to the east. The day was radiant and warm. Every now and then we heard the subterranean thunder of Vesuvius; its distant deep peals

seemed to shake the very air and light of day, which interpenetrated our frames, with the sullen and tremendous sound. This scene was what the Greeks beheld (Pompeii, you know, was a Greek city). They lived in harmony with nature ; and the interstices of their incomparable columns were portals, as it were, to admit the spirit of beauty which animates this glorious universe to visit those whom it inspired. If such is Pompeii, what was Athens ? What scene was exhibited from the Acropolis, the Parthenon, and the temples of Hercules, and Theseus, and the Winds ? The islands and the Ægean sea, the mountains of Argolis, and the peaks of Pindus and Olympus, and the darkness of the Bœotian forests interspersed ?

From the Forum we went to another public place ; a triangular portico, half enclosing the ruins of an enormous temple. It is built on the edge of the hill overlooking the sea.  That black point is the temple. In the apex of the triangle stands an altar and a fountain, and before the altar once stood the statue of the builder of the portico. Returning hence, and following the consular road, we came to the eastern gate of the city. The walls are of enormous strength, and enclose a space of three miles. On each side of the road beyond the gate are built the tombs. How unlike ours ! They seem not so much hiding-places for that which must decay, as voluptuous chambers for immortal spirits. They are of marble, radiantly white ; and two, especially beautiful, are loaded with exquisite bas-reliefs. On the stucco-wall that encloses them are little emblematic figures, of a relief exceedingly low, of dead and dying animals, and little winged genii, and female forms bending in groups in some funereal office. The higher reliefs represent, one a nautical subject, and the other a Bacchanalian one. Within the cell stand the cinerary urns, sometimes one, sometimes more. It is said that paintings were found within ; which are now, as has been everything moveable in Pompeii, removed,

and scattered about in royal museums. These tombs were the most impressive things of all. The wild woods surround them on either side; and along the broad stones of the paved road which divides them, you hear the late leaves of autumn shiver and rustle in the stream of the inconstant wind, as it were, like the step of ghosts. The radiance and magnificence of these dwellings of the dead, the white freshness of the scarcely-finished marble, the impassioned or imaginative life of the figures which adorn them, contrast strangely with the simplicity of the houses of those who were living when Vesuvius overwhelmed them.<sup>1</sup>

I have forgotten the amphitheatre, which is of great magnitude, though much inferior to the Coliseum. I now understand why the Greeks were such great poets; and, above all, I can account, it seems to me, for the harmony, the unity, the perfection, the uniform excellence, of all their works of art. They lived in a perpetual commerce with external nature, and nourished themselves upon the spirit of its forms. Their theatres were all open to the mountains and the sky. Their columns, the ideal types of a sacred forest, with its roof of interwoven tracery, admitted the light and wind; the odour and the freshness of the country penetrated the cities. Their temples were mostly upaithric; and the flying clouds, the stars, or the deep sky, were seen above. O, but for that series of wretched wars which terminated in the Roman conquest of the world; but for the Christian religion, which put the finishing stroke on the ancient system; but for those changes that conducted Athens to its ruin—to what an eminence might not humanity have arrived!

<sup>1</sup> "I stood within the city disinterred;  
And heard the autumnal leaves, like light footfalls  
Of spirits passing through the streets; and heard  
The mountain's slumberous voice at intervals  
Thrill through those roofless halls."

—"Ode to Naples."

In a short time I hope to tell you something of the museum of this city.

You see how ill I follow the maxim of Horace, at least in its literal sense : "nil admirari"—which I should say, "prope res est una"—to prevent there ever being anything admirable in the world. Fortunately Plato is of my opinion ; and I had rather err with Plato than be right with Horace.

At this moment I received your letter, indicating that you are removing to London. I am very much interested in the subject of this change, and beg you would write me all the particulars of it. You will be able now to give me perhaps a closer insight into the politics of the times than was permitted you at Marlow. Of H—— I have a very slight opinion. There are rumours here of a revolution in Spain. A ship came in twelve days [since] from Catalonia, and brought a report that the king was massacred ; that eighteen thousand insurgents surrounded Madrid ; but that before the popular party gained head enough, seven thousand were murdered by the Inquisition. Perhaps you know all by this time. The old king of Spain is dead here. Cobbett is a fine *ὑμενοποιος*—does his influence increase or diminish ? What a pity that so powerful a genius should be combined with the most odious moral qualities.

We have reports here of a change in the English ministry—to what does it amount ? for, besides my national interest in it, I am on the watch to vindicate my most sacred rights, invaded by the chancery court.

I suppose now we shall not see you in Italy this spring, whether Hunt comes or not. It's probable that I shall hear nothing from him for some months, particularly if he does not come. Give me *ses nouvelles*.

I am under an English surgeon here, who says I have a disease of the liver, which he will cure. We keep horses, as this kind of exercise is absolutely essential to my health,



Elise<sup>1</sup> has just married our Italian servant, and has quitted us; the man was a great rascal, and cheated enormously: this event was very much against our advice.

I have scarcely been out since I wrote last.

Adieu!—Yours most faithfully,

P. B. S.

314. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

NAPLES,

February 25th, 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I am much interested to hear your progress in the object of your removal to London, especially as I hear from Horace Smith of the advantages attending it. There is no person in the world who would more sincerely rejoice in any good fortune that might befall you than I should.

We are on the point of quitting Naples for Rome. The scenery which surrounds this city is more delightful than any within the immediate reach of civilized man. I don't think I have mentioned to you the Lago d'Agnano and the Caccia d'Ischieri, and I have since seen what obscures those lovely forms in my memory. They are both the craters of extinguished volcanos, and Nature has thrown forth forests of oak and ilex, and spread mossy lawns and clear lakes over the dead or sleeping fire. The first is a scene of a wider and milder character, with soft sloping wooded hills, and grassy declivities declining to the lake, and cultivated plains of vines woven upon poplar trees, bounded by the theatre of hills. Innumerable wild water-birds, quite tame, inhabit this place. The other is a royal chace, and is surrounded by steep and lofty hills, and only accessible through a wide gate of mossy oak, from the

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<sup>1</sup> A Swiss girl whom the Shelley's had engaged as nursery-maid two years before, at Geneva.

vestibule of which the spectacle of precipitous hills, hemming in a narrow and circular vale, is suddenly disclosed. The hills are covered with thick woods of ilex, myrtle, and laurustinus; the polished leaves of the ilex, as they wave in their multitudes under the partial blasts which rush through the chasms of the valc, glitter above the dark masses of foliage below, like the white foam of waves upon a deep blue sea. The plain so surrounded is at most three miles in circumference. It is occupied partly by a lake, with bold shores wooded by evergreens, and interrupted by a sylvan promontory of the wild forest, whose mossy boughs overhang its expanse, of a silent and purple darkness, like an Italian midnight; and partly by the forest itself, of all gigantic trees, but the oak especially, whose jagged boughs, now leafless, are hoary with thick lichens, and loaded with the massy and deep foliage of the ivy. The effect of the dark eminences that surround this plain, seen through the boughs, is of an enchanting solemnity. (There we saw in one instance wild boars and a deer, and in another—a spectacle little suited to the antique and Latonian nature of the place—King Ferdinand in a winter enclosure, watching to shoot wild boars.) The underwood was principally evergreen, all lovely kinds of fern and furze; the cytisus, a delicate kind of furze with a pretty yellow blossom, the myrtle, and the myrica. The willow trees had just begun to put forth their green and golden buds, and gleamed like points of lambent fire among the wintry forest. The Grotta del Cane, too, we saw, because other people see it; but would not allow the dogs to be exhibited in torture for our curiosity. The poor little animals<sup>1</sup> stood moving their tails in a slow and dismal manner, as if perfectly resigned to their condition—a cur-like emblem of voluntary servitude. The effect of the vapour, which extinguishes a torch, is to cause suffocation at last, through a process which makes the

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<sup>1</sup> "Several dogs are kept for exhibition, but only one is exhibited at a time."—Note by T. L. Peacock.

lungs feel as if they were torn by sharp points within. So a surgeon told us, who tried the experiment on himself.

There was a Greek city, sixty miles to the south of Naples called Posidonia, now Pesto, where there still subsist three temples of Etruscan<sup>1</sup> architecture still perfect. From this city we have just returned. The weather was most unfavourable for our expedition. After two months of cloudless serenity, it began raining cats and dogs. The first night we slept at Salerno, a large city situate in the recess of a deep bay; surrounded with stupendous mountains of the same name. A few miles from Torre del Greco we entered on the pass of the mountains, which is a line dividing the isthmus of those enormous piles of rock which compose the southern boundary of the bay of Naples, and the northern one of that of Salerno. On one side is a lofty conical hill, crowned with the turrets of a ruined castle, and cut into platforms for cultivation; at least every ravine and glen, whose precipitous sides admitted of other vegetation but that of the rock-rooted ilex: on the other, the æthereal snowy crags of an immense mountain, whose terrible lineaments were at intervals concealed or disclosed by volumes of dense clouds, rolling under the tempest. Half a mile from this spot, between orange and lemon groves of a lovely village, suspended as it were on an amphitheatral precipice, whose golden globes contrasted with the white walls and dark green leaves which they almost outnumbered, shone the sea. A burst of the declining sunlight illumined it. The road led along the brink of the precipice towards Salerno. Nothing could be more glorious than the scene. The immense mountains covered with the rare and divine vegetation of this climate, with many-folding vales, and deep dark recesses, which the fancy scarcely could penetrate, descended from their snowy summits precipitously to the sea. Before us was Salerno, built into a declining

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<sup>1</sup> "The architecture is Doric."—Note by T. L. Peacock.

plain, between the mountains and the sea. Beyond, the other shore of sky-cleaving mountains, then dim with the mist of tempest. Underneath, from the base of the precipice where the road conducted, rocky promontories jutted into the sea, covered with olive and ilex woods, or with the ruined battlements of some Norman or Saracenic fortress. We slept at Salerno, and the next morning before day-break proceeded to Posidonia. The night had been tempestuous, and our way lay by the sea sand. It was utterly dark, except when the long line of wave burst, with a sound like thunder, beneath the starless sky, and cast up a kind of mist of cold white lustre. When morning came, we found ourselves travelling in a wide desert plain, perpetually interrupted by wild irregular glens, and bounded on all sides by the Apennines and the sea. Sometimes it was covered with forest, sometimes dotted with underwood, or mere tufts of fern and furze, and the wintry dry tendrils of creeping plants. I have never, but in the Alps, seen an amphitheatre of mountains so magnificent. After travelling fifteen miles we came to a river, the bridge of which had been broken, and which was so swollen that the ferry would not take the carriage across. We had, therefore, to walk seven miles of a muddy road, which led to the ancient city across the desolate Maremma. The air was scented with the sweet smell of violets of an extraordinary size and beauty. At length we saw the sublime and massy colonnades, skirting the horizon of the wilderness. We entered by the ancient gate, which is now no more than a chasm in the rock-like wall. Deeply sunk in the ground beside it, were the ruins of a sepulchre, which the ancients were in the custom of building beside the public way. The first temple, which is the smallest, consists of an outer range of columns, quite perfect, and supporting a perfect architrave and two shattered frontispieces.<sup>1</sup> The proportions are

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<sup>1</sup> "The three temples are amphiprostyle; that is, they have two prospects or fronts, each of six columns in the two first, and of nine in the Basilica. See Major's 'Ruins of Paestum,' 1768."—Note by T. L. Peacock.

extremely massy, and the architecture entirely unornamented and simple. These columns do not seem more than forty feet high,<sup>1</sup> but the perfect proportions diminish the apprehension of their magnitude; it seems as if inequality and irregularity of form were requisite to force on us the relative idea of greatness. The scene from between the columns of the temple, consists on one side of the sea, to which the gentle hill on which it is built slopes, and on the other, of the grand amphitheatre of the loftiest Apennines, dark purple mountains, crowned with snow and intersected there by long bars of hard and leaden-coloured cloud. The effect of the jagged outline of mountains, through groups of enormous columns on one side, and on the other the level horizon of the sea, is inexpressibly grand. The second temple is much larger, and also more perfect. Beside the outer range of columns, it contains an interior range of column above column, and the ruins of a wall, which was the screen of the penetralia. With little diversity of ornament, the order of architecture is similar to that of the first temple. The columns in all are fluted, and built of a porous volcanic stone, which time has dyed with a rich and yellow colour. The columns are one-third larger, and like that of the first, diminish from the base to the capital, so that, but for the chastening effect of their admirable proportions, their magnitude would, from the delusion of perspective, seem greater, not less, than it is; though perhaps we ought to say, not that this symmetry diminishes your apprehension of their magnitude, but that it overpowers the idea of relative greatness, by establishing within itself a system of relations, destructive of your idea of its relation with other objects, on which our ideas of size depend. The third

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<sup>1</sup> "The height of the columns is respectively 18 feet 6 inches, and 28 feet 5 inches and 6½ lines, in the two first temples; and 21 feet 6 inches in the Basilica. This shows the justice of the remarks on the difference of real and apparent magnitude."—Note by T. L. Peacock.

temple is what they call a Basilica ; three columns alone remain of the interior range ; the exterior is perfect, but that the cornice and frieze in many places have fallen. This temple covers more ground than either of the others, but its columns are of an intermediate magnitude between those of the second and first.

We only contemplated these sublime monuments for two hours, and of course could only bring away so imperfect a conception of them, as is the shadow of some half-remembered dream.

The royal collection of paintings in this city is sufficiently miserable. Perhaps the most remarkable is the original study by Michael Angelo of the "Day of Judgment," which is painted in *fresco* on the Sixtine chapel of the Vatican. It is there so defaced as to be wholly indistinguishable. I cannot but think the genius of this artist highly overrated. He has not only no temperance, no modesty, no feeling for the just boundaries of art (and in these respects an admirable genius may err), but he has no sense of beauty, and to want this is to want the sense of the creative power of mind. What is terror without a contrast with, and a connexion with, loveliness ? How well Dante understood this secret—Dante, with whom this artist has been so presumptuously compared ! What a thing his "Moses" is ; how distorted from all that is natural and majestic, only less monstrous and detestable than its historical prototype. In the picture to which I allude, God is leaning out of heaven, as it were eagerly enjoying the final scene of the infernal tragedy he set the Universe to act. The Holy Ghost, in the shape of a dove, is under him. Under the Holy Ghost stands Jesus Christ, in an attitude of haranguing the assembly. This figure, which his subject, or rather the view which it became him to take of it, ought to have modelled of a calm, severe, awe-inspiring majesty, terrible yet lovely, is in the attitude of commonplace resentment. On one side of this figure are the elect ; on the other, the host of heaven ; they ought to have

been what the Christians call *glorified bodies*, floating onward and radiant with the everlasting light (I speak in the spirit of their faith), which had consumed their mortal veil. They are in fact very ordinary people. Below is the ideal purgatory, I imagine, in mid air, in the shapes of spirits, some of whom *dæmons* are dragging down, others falling as it were by their own weight, others half-suspended in that Mahomet-coffin-kind of attitude which most moderate Christians, I believe, expect to assume. Every step towards hell approximates to the region of the artist's exclusive power. There is great imagination in many of the situations of these unfortunate spirits. But hell and death are his real sphere. The bottom of the picture is divided by a lofty rock, in which there is a cavern whose entrance is thronged by devils, some coming in with spirits, some going out for prey. The blood-red light of the fiery abyss glows through their dark forms. On one side are the devils in all hideous forms, struggling with the damned, who have received their sentence at the Redeemer's throne, and chained in all forms of agony by knotted serpents, and writhing on the crags in every variety of torture. On the other are the dead, coming out of their graves—horrible forms. Such is the famous "Day of Judgment" of Michael Angelo; a kind of "Titus Andronicus" in painting, but the author surely no Shakspeare. The other paintings are one or two of Raphael or his pupils, very sweet and lovely. A "Danæ" of Titian, a picture of the softest and most voluptuous form, with languid and uplifted eyes, and warm yet passive limbs. A "Madde-lena," by Guido, with dark brown hair, and dark brown eyes, and an earnest, soft, melancholy look. And some excellent pictures, in point of execution, by Annibal Caracci. None others worth a second look. Of the gallery of statues I cannot speak. They require a volume, not a letter. Still less what can I do at Rome?

I have just seen the *Quarterly* for September (not from my own box). I suppose there is no chance now of your

organizing a review! This is a great pity. The *Quarterly* is undoubtedly conducted with talent, great talent, and affords a dreadful preponderance against the cause of improvement. If a band of staunch reformers, resolute yet skilful infidels, were united in so close and constant a league<sup>1</sup> as that in which interest and fanaticism have bound the members of that literary coalition!

Adieu. Address your next letter to Rome, whence you shall hear from me soon again. Mary and Clara unite with me in the very kindest remembrances.—Most faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

A doctor here has been messing me, and I believe has done me an important benefit. One of his pretty schemes has been putting caustic on my side. You may guess how much quiet I have had since it was laid on.

[P.S. on outer sheet.] It is of consequence to us to know where the boxes really are which we left in London. Will you be so kind as to make the necessary enquiries; if they are not at the Hunts' they may still be found.

[Addressed outside],

THOMAS L. PEACOCK, Esq.,  
New Hummums, London,  
Inghilterra.

### 315. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

ROME,<sup>2</sup>

March 23, 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I wrote to you the day before our departure from Naples. We came by slow journeys, with our own horses, to Rome, resting one day at Mola di Gaeta, at the inn called Villa

<sup>1</sup> "This was the idea which was subsequently intended to be carried out in the *Liberal*."—Peacock's note.

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Dowden says that Shelley, Mary and Clare, left Naples on the afternoon of Feb. 28, and resting for a day at Mola, they arrived at Rome on March 5, where they obtained lodgings in the Palazzo Verospi on the Corso.



di Cicerone, from being built on the ruins of his Villa, whose immense substructions overhang the sea, and are scattered among the orange groves. Nothing can be lovelier than the scene from the terraces of the inn. On one side precipitous mountains, whose bases slope into an inclined plane of olive and orange copses—the latter forming, as it were, an emerald sky of leaves, starred with innumerable globes of their ripening fruit, whose rich splendour contrasted with the deep green foliage; on the other the sea—bounded on one side by the antique town of Gaeta, and the other by what appears to be an island, the promontory of Circe. From Gaeta to Terracina the whole scenery is of the most sublime character. At Terracina, precipitous conical crags of immense height shoot into the sky and overhang the sea. At Albano, we arrived again in sight of Rome. Arches after arches in unending lines stretching across the uninhabited wilderness, the blue defined line of the mountains seen between them; masses of nameless ruin standing like rocks out of the plain; and the plain itself, with its billowy and unequal surface, announced the neighbourhood of Rome. And what shall I say to you of Rome? If I speak of the inanimate ruins, the rude stones piled upon stones, which are the sepulchres of the fame of those who once arrayed them with the beauty which has faded, will you believe me insensible to the vital, the almost breathing creations of genius yet subsisting in their perfection? What has become, you will ask, of the Apollo, the Gladiator, the Venus of the Capitól? What of the Apollo di Belvedere, the Laocoön? What of Raffael and Guido? These things are best spoken of when the mind has drunk in the spirit of their forms; and little indeed can I, who must devote no more than a few months to the contemplation of them, hope to know or feel of their profound beauty.

I think I told you of the Coliseum, and its impressions on me on my first visit to this city. The next most considerable relic of antiquity, considered as a ruin, is the

Thermæ of Caracalla.<sup>1</sup> These consist of six enormous chambers, above 200 feet in height, and each enclosing a vast space like that of a field. There are, in addition, a number of towers and labyrinthine recesses, hidden and woven over by the wild growth of weeds and ivy. Never was any desolation more sublime and lovely. The perpendicular wall of ruin is cloven into steep ravines filled up with flowering shrubs, whose thick twisted roots are knotted in the rifts of the stones. At every step the ærial pinnacles of shattered stone group into new combinations of effect, and tower above the lofty yet level walls, as the distant mountains change their aspect to one travelling rapidly along the plain. The perpendicular walls resemble nothing more than that cliff of Bisham wood, that is overgrown with wood, and yet is stony and precipitous—you know the one I mean; not the chalk-pit, but the spot that has the pretty copse of fir-trees and privet-bushes at its base, and where H[ogg]? and I scrambled up, and you, to my infinite discontent, would go home. These walls surround green and level spaces of lawn, on which some elms have grown, and which are interspersed towards their skirts by masses of fallen ruin, overtwined with the broad leaves of the creeping weeds. The blue sky canopies it, and is as the everlasting roof of these enormous halls.

But the most interesting effect remains. In one of the buttresses that supports an immense and lofty arch, "which bridges the very winds of heaven," are the crumbling remains of an antique winding staircase, whose sides are open in many places to the precipice. This you ascend,

<sup>1</sup> In his preface to "Prometheus Unbound," Shelley says: "This Poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever-winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening of spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama." See p. 715.

and arrive on the summit of these piles. There grow on every side thick entangled wildernesses of myrtle, and the myrletus, and bay, and the flowering laurustinus, whose white blossoms are just developed, the white fig, and a thousand nameless plants sown by the wandering winds. These woods are intersected on every side by paths, like sheep-tracks through the copse-wood of steep mountains, which wind to every part of the immense labyrinth. From the midst rise those pinnacles and masses, themselves like mountains, which have been seen from below. In one place you wind along a narrow strip of weed-grown ruin : on one side is the immensity of earth and sky, on the other a narrow chasm, which is bounded by an arch of enormous size, fringed by the many-coloured foliage and blossoms, and supporting a lofty and irregular pyramid, overgrown like itself with the all prevailing-vegetation. Around rise other crags and other peaks, all arrayed, and the deformity of their vast desolation softened down, by the undecaying investiture of nature. Come to Rome. It is a scene by which expression is overpowered ; which words cannot convey. Still further, winding up one half of the shattered pyramids, by the path through the blooming copse-wood, you come to a little mossy lawn, surrounded by the wild shrubs ; it is overgrown with anemonies, wall-flowers, and violets, whose stalks pierce the starry moss, and with radiant blue flowers, whose names I know not, and which scatter through the air the divinest odour, which, as you recline under the shade of the ruin, produces sensations of voluptuous faintness, like the combinations of sweet music. The paths still wind on, threading the perplexed windings, other labyrinths, other lawns, and deep dells of wood, and lofty rocks, and terrific chasms. When I tell you that these ruins cover several acres, and that the paths above penetrate at least half their extent, your imagination will fill up all that I am unable to express of this astonishing scene.

I speak of these things not in the order in which I visited

them, but in that of the impression which they made on me, or perhaps chance directs. The ruins of the ancient Forum are so far fortunate that they have not been walled up in the modern city. They stand in an open, lonesome place, bounded on one side by the modern city, and the other by the Palatine Mount, covered with shapeless masses of ruin. The tourists tell you all about these things, and I am afraid of stumbling on their language when I enumerate what is so well known. There remain eight granite columns of the Ionic order, with their entablature, of the temple of Concord, founded by Camillus. I fear that the immense expanse demanded by these columns forbids us to hope that they are the remains of any edifice dedicated by that most perfect and virtuous of men. It is supposed to have been repaired under the Eastern Emperors; alas, what a contrast of recollections! Near them stand those Corinthian fluted columns, which supported the angle of a temple; the architrave and entablature are worked with delicate sculpture. Beyond, to the south, is another solitary column; and still more distant, three more, supporting the wreck of an entablature. Descending from the Capitol to the Forum, is the triumphal arch of Septimius Severus, less perfect than that of Constantine, though from its proportions and magnitude, a most impressive monument. That of Constantine, or rather of Titus (for the relief and sculpture, and even the colossal images of Dacian captives, were torn by a decree of the senate from an arch dedicated to the latter, to adorn that of this stupid and wicked monster, Constantine, one of whose chief merits consists in establishing a religion, the destroyer of those arts which would have rendered so base a spoliation unnecessary), is the most perfect. It is an admirable work of art. It is built of the finest marble, and the outline of the reliefs is in many parts as perfect as if just finished. Four Corinthian fluted columns support, on each side, a bold entablature, whose bases are loaded with reliefs of captives in every attitude

of humiliation and slavery. The compartments above express, in bolder relief, the enjoyment of success; the conqueror on his throne, or in his chariot, or nodding over the crushed multitudes, who writhe under his horses' hoofs, as those below express the torture and abjectness of defeat. There are three arches, whose roofs are panelled with fretwork, and their sides adorned with similar reliefs. The keystone of these arches is supported each by two winged figures of Victory, whose hair floats on the wind of their own speed, and whose arms are outstretched, bearing trophies, as if impatient to meet. They look, as it were, borne from the subject extremities of the earth, on the breath which is the exhalation of that battle and desolation, which it is their mission to commemorate. Never were monuments so completely fitted to the purpose for which they were designed, of expressing that mixture of energy and error which is called a triumph.

I walk forth in the purple and golden light of an Italian evening, and return by star or moonlight, through this scene. The elms are just budding, and the warm spring winds bring unknown odours, all sweet from the country. I see the radiant Orion through the mighty columns of the temple of Concord, and the mellow fading light softens down the modern buildings of the Capitol, the only ones that interfere with the sublime desolation of the scene. On the steps of the Capitol itself, stand two colossal statues of Castor and Pollux, each with his horse, finely executed, though far inferior to those of Monte Cavallo, the cast of one of which you know we saw together in London. This walk is close to our lodging, and this is my evening walk.

What shall I say of the modern city? Rome is yet the capital of the world. It is a city of palaces and temples, more glorious than those which any other city contains, and of ruins more glorious than they. Seen from any of the eminences that surround it, it exhibits domes beyond domes, and palaces, and colonnades interminably, even

to the horizon ; interspersed with patches of desert, and mighty ruins which stand girt by their own desolation, in the midst of the fanes of living religions and the habitations of living men, in sublime loneliness. St. Peter's is, as you have heard, the loftiest building in Europe. Externally it is inferior in architectural beauty to St. Paul's, though not wholly devoid of it ; internally it exhibits littleness on a large scale, and is in every respect opposed to antique taste. You know my propensity to admire ; and I tried to persuade myself out of this opinion—in vain ; the more I see of the interior of St. Peter's, the less impression as a whole does it produce on me. I cannot even think it lofty, though its dome is considerably higher than any hill within fifty miles of London ; and when one reflects, it is an astonishing monument of the daring energy of man. Its colonnade is wonderfully fine, and there are two fountains, which rise in spire-like columns of water to an immense height in the sky, and falling on the porphyry vases from which they spring, fill the air with a radiant mist, which at noon is thronged with innumerable rainbows. In the midst stands an obelisk. In front is the palace-like façade of St. Peter's, certainly magnificent ; and there is produced, on the whole, an architectural combination unequalled in the world. But the dome of the temple is concealed, except at a very great distance, by the façade and the inferior part of the building, and that diabolical contrivance they call an attic.

The effect of the Pantheon is totally the reverse of that of St. Peter's. Though not a fourth part of the size, it is, as it were, the visible image of the universe ; in the perfection of its proportions, as when you regard the unmeasured dome of heaven, the idea of magnitude is swallowed up and lost. It is open to the sky, and its wide dome is lighted by the ever-changing illumination of the air. The clouds of noon fly over it, and at night the keen stars are seen through the azure darkness, hanging immoveably, or driving after the driving moon among the clouds. We

visited it by moonlight ; it is supported by sixteen columns, fluted and Corinthian, of a certain rare and beautiful yellow marble, exquisitely polished, called here *giallo antico*. Above these are the niches for the statues of the twelve gods. This is the only defect of this sublime temple ; there ought to have been no interval between the commencement of the dome and the cornice, supported by the columns. Thus there would have been no diversion from the magnificent simplicity of its form. This improvement is alone wanting to have completed the unity of the idea.

The fountains of Rome are, in themselves, magnificent combinations of art, such as alone it were worth coming to see. That in the Piazza Navona, a large square, is composed of enormous fragments of rock, piled on each other, and penetrated as by caverns. This mass supports an Egyptian obelisk of immense height. On the four corners of the rock recline, in different attitudes, colossal figures representing the four divisions of the globe. The water bursts from the crevices beneath them. They are sculptured with great spirit ; one impatiently tearing a veil from his eyes ; another with his hands stretched upwards. The Fontana di Trevi is the most celebrated, and is rather a waterfall than a fountain ; gushing out from masses of rock, with a gigantic figure of Neptune ; and below are two river gods, checking two winged horses, struggling up from among the rocks and waters. The whole is not ill conceived nor executed ; but you know not how delicate the imagination becomes by dieting with antiquity day after day ! The only things that sustain the comparison are Raffael, Guido, and Salvator Rosa.

The fountain on the Quirinal, or rather the group formed by the statues, obelisk, and the fountain, is, however, the most admirable of all. From the Piazza Quirinale, or rather Monte Cavallo, you see the boundless ocean of domes, spires, and columns, which is the City, Rome. On a pedestal of white marble rises an obelisk of red granite, piercing the blue sky. Before it is a vast basin of porphyry,

in the midst of which rises a column of the purest water, which collects into itself all the overhanging colours of the sky, and breaks them into a thousand prismatic hues and graduated shadows—they fall together with its dashing water-drops into the outer basin. The elevated situation of this fountain produces, I imagine, this effect of colour. On each side, on an elevated pedestal, stand the statues of Castor and Pollux, each in the act of taming his horse ; which are said, but I believe wholly without authority, to be the work of Phidias and Praxiteles. These figures combine the irresistible energy with the sublime and perfect loveliness supposed to have belonged to their divine nature. The reins no longer exist, and the position of their hands and the sustained and calm command of their regard, seem to require no mechanical aid to enforce obedience. The countenances at so great a height are scarcely visible, and I have a better idea of that of which we saw a cast together in London, than of the other. But the sublime and living majesty of their limbs and mien, the nervous and fiery animation of the horses they restrain, seen in the blue sky of Italy, and overlooking the city of Rome, surrounded by the light and the music of that crystalline fountain, no cast can communicate.

These figures were found at the Baths of Constantine ; but, of course, are of remote antiquity. I do not acquiesce, however, in the practice of attributing to Phidias, or Praxiteles, or Scopas, or some great master, any admirable work that may be found. We find little of what remained, and perhaps the works of these were such as greatly surpassed all that we conceive of most perfect and admirable in what little has escaped the *deluge*. If I am too jealous of the honour of the Greeks, our masters and creators, the gods whom we should worship,—pardon me.

I have said what I feel without entering into any critical discussions of the *ruins* of Rome, and the mere outside of this inexhaustible mine of thought and feeling. Hobhouse, Eustace, and Forsyth, will tell all the show-knowledge



about it,—“the common stuff of the earth.” By-the-bye, Forsyth is worth reading, as I judge from a chapter or two I have seen. I cannot get the book here.<sup>1</sup>

I ought to have observed that the central arch of the triumphal Arch of Titus yet subsists, more perfect in its proportions, they say, than any of a later date. This I did not remark. The figures of Victory, with unfolded wings, and each spurning back a globe with outstretched feet, are, perhaps, more beautiful than those on either of the others. Their lips are parted: a delicate mode of indicating the fervour of their desire to arrive at the destined resting-place, and to express the eager respiration of their speed. Indeed, so essential to beauty were the forms expressive of the exercise of the imagination and the affections considered by *Greek* artists, that no ideal figure of antiquity, not destined to some representation directly exclusive of such a character, is to be found with closed lips. Within this arch are two panelled alto relievos, one representing a train of people bearing in procession the instruments of Jewish worship, among which is the holy candlestick with seven branches; on the other, Titus standing on a quadriga, with a winged Victory. The grouping of the horses, and the beauty, correctness, and energy of their delineation, is remarkable, though they are much destroyed.

### 316. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

ROME,

April 6, 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I sent you yesterday a long letter, all about antique

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<sup>1</sup> John Cam Hobhouse, Lord Broughton (1786-1869), Byron's friend and executor, who contributed the notes printed at the end of the fourth canto of "*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*." John Chetwode Eustace (1762?-1815), a Roman Catholic priest whose "*Classical Tour Through Italy*" was published in 1813. Joseph Forsyth (1763-1815), author of "*Remarks on Antiquities, Arts and Letters, during an Excursion in Italy in the years 1802 and 1803*," 1813.

Rome, which you had better keep for some leisure day. I received yours, and one of Hunt's, yesterday.—So, you know the Boinvilles? I could not help considering Mrs. Boinville, when I knew her, as the most admirable specimen of a human being I had ever seen. Nothing earthly ever appeared to be more perfect than her character and manners. It is improbable that I shall ever meet again the person whom I so much esteemed, and still admire. I wish, however, that when you see her, you would tell her that I have not forgotten her, nor any of the amiable circle once assembled round her; and that I desire such remembrances to her as an exile and a *Pariah* may be permitted to address to an acknowledged member of the community of mankind. I hear they dined at your lodgings. But no mention of A——<sup>1</sup> and his wife—where were they? Cornelia, though so young when I saw her, gave indications of her mother's excellences; and, certainly less fascinating, is, I doubt not, equally amiable, and more sincere. It was hardly possible for a person of the extreme subtlety and delicacy of Mrs. Boinville's understanding and affections, to be quite sincere and constant.

I am all anxiety about your I. H. affair.<sup>2</sup> There are few

<sup>1</sup> Professor Dowden says that " 'A—— and his wife' (if not Mr. and Mrs. Turner) probably were Mrs. Boinville's son Alfred and his wife. He married, in 1818, Harriet, daughter of the Vegetarian Dr. Lambe," whose book on cancer is quoted in the notes to "Queen Mab." Towards the close of his life "Shelley wrote to Mrs. Boinville, then living at Sidmouth with her daughter, Cornelia Turner, and expressed a wish to come within sight of the smoke of her cottage chimney. Mrs. Boinville, who had been pained by the opinions set forth in some of Shelley's published writings, declined to receive him as a visitor at that time, and afterwards deeply regretted her decision, by which she had thrown away this last opportunity of seeing a friend to whom she had been so dear, and who had remembered so gratefully her former affection."—"Life of Shelley," Vol. I, 379.

<sup>2</sup> Peacock was a candidate for a position, to which he was afterwards appointed, in the East India House.

who will feel more hearty satisfaction at your success, in this or any other enterprise, than I shall. Pray let me have the earliest intelligence.

When shall I return to England? The Pythia has ascended the tripod, but she replies not. Our present plans—and I know not what can induce us to alter them—lead us back to Naples in a month or six weeks, where it is almost decided that we should remain until the commencement of 1820. You may imagine, when we receive such letters as yours and Hunt's, what this resolution costs us—but these are not our only communications from England. My health is materially better. My spirits, not the most brilliant in the world, but that we attribute to our solitary situation, and, though happy, how should I be lively? We see something of Italian society indeed. The Romans please me much, especially the women, who, though totally devoid of every kind of information, or culture of the imagination, or affections, or understanding—and, in this respect, a kind of gentle savage—yet contrive to be interesting. Their extreme innocence and naïveté, the freedom and gentleness of their manners; the total absence of affectation, makes an intercourse with them very like an intercourse with uncorrupted children, whom they resemble in loveliness as well as simplicity. I have seen two women in society here of the highest beauty; their brows and lips, and the moulding of the face modelled with sculptural exactness, and the dark luxuriance of their hair floating over their fine complexions; and the lips—you must hear the commonplaces which escape from them, before they cease to be dangerous. The only inferior part are the eyes, which, though good and gentle, want the mazy depth of colour behind colour, with which the intellectual women of England and Germany entangle the heart in soul-inwoven labyrinths.

This is holy-week, and Rome is quite full. The Emperor of Austria is here, and Maria Louisa is coming. On their journey through the other cities of Italy, she was greeted

with loud acclamations, and *vivas* of Napoleon. Idiots and slaves! Like the frogs in the fable, because they are discontented with the log, they call upon the stork, who devours them. Great festas, and magnificent funzioni here—we cannot get tickets to all. There are five thousand strangers in Rome, and only room for five hundred, at the celebration of the famous Miserere, in the Sixtine chapel, the only thing I regret we shall not be present at. After all, Rome is eternal; and were all that *is* extinguished, that which *has been*, the ruins and the sculptures, would remain, and Raffael and Guido be alone regretted.

In the Square of St. Peter's there are about three hundred fettered criminals at work, hoeing out the weeds that grow between the stones of the pavement. Their legs are heavily ironed, and some are chained two by two. They sit in long rows, hoeing out the weeds, dressed in parti-coloured clothes. Near them sit or saunter groups of soldiers, armed with loaded muskets. The iron discord of those innumerable chains clanks up into the sonorous air, and produces, contrasted with the musical dashing of the fountains, and the deep azure beauty of the sky, and the magnificence of the architecture around, a conflict of sensations allied to madness. It is the emblem of Italy—moral degradation contrasted with the glory of nature and the arts.

We see no English society here; it is not probable that we would if we desired it, and I am certain that we should find it unsupportable. The manners of the rich English are wholly unsupportable, and they assume pretensions which they would not venture upon in their own country. I am yet ignorant of the event of Hobhouse's election. I saw the last numbers were—Lamb, 4200; and Hobhouse, 3900—14th day. There is little hope. That mischievous Cobbett has divided and weakened the interests of the popular party, so that the factions that prey upon our country have been able to coalesce to its exclusion. The Newtons you have not seen. I am curious to know

what kind of a girl Octavia becomes ; she promised well. Tell H—— his Melpomene is in the Vatican, and that her attitude and drapery surpass, if possible, the graces of her countenance.

My "Prometheus Unbound" is just finished, and in a month or two I shall send it. It is a drama, with characters and mechanism of a kind yet unattempted ; and I think the execution is better than any of my former attempts. By-the-bye, have you seen Ollier ? I never hear from him, and am ignorant whether some verses I sent him from Naples, entitled, I think, "Lines on the Euganean hills," have reached him in safety or not. As to the Reviews, I suppose there is nothing but abuse ; and this is not hearty or sincere enough to amuse me. As to the poem now printing,<sup>1</sup> I lay no stress on it one way or the other. The concluding lines are natural.

I believe, my dear Peacock, that you wish us to come back to England. How is it possible ? Health, competence, tranquillity—all these Italy permits, and England takes away. I am regarded by all who know or hear of me, except, I think, on the whole, five individuals, as a rare prodigy of crime and pollution, whose look even might infect. This is a large computation, and I don't think I could mention more than three. Such is the spirit of the English abroad as well as at home.

Few compensate, indeed, for all the rest, and if I were *alone* I should laugh ; or if I were rich enough to do all things, which I shall never be. Pity me for my absence from those social enjoyments which England might afford me, and which I know so well how to appreciate. Still I shall return some fine morning, out of pure weakness of heart.

My dear Peacock, most faithfully yours,  
P. B. SHELLEY.

<sup>1</sup> "Rosalind and Helen," published in the spring of 1819.

317. TO JOHN AND MARIA GISBORNE  
(Leghorn)

ROME,

April 6, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

A combination of circumstances, which Mary will explain to you, leads us back to Naples in June, or rather the end of May, where we shall remain until the ensuing winter.<sup>1</sup> We shall take a house at Portici or Castel a Mare, until late in the autumn.

The object of this letter is to ask you to spend this period with us. There is no society which we have regretted or desired so much as yours, and in our solitude the benefit of your concession would be greater than I can express. What is a sail to Naples? It is the season of tranquil weather and prosperous winds. If I knew the magic that lay in any given form of words, I would employ them to persuade; but I fear that all I can say is, as you know with truth, we desire that you would come—we wish to see you. You came to see Mary at Lucca, directly I had departed to Venice. It is not our custom, when we can help it, any more than it is yours, to divide our pleasures.

What shall I say to entice you? We shall have a piano, and some books, and—little else, besides ourselves. But

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<sup>1</sup> In Mary Shelley's letter from Rome, April 26, 1819, to Mrs. Gisborne, she speaks of their intention of leaving for Naples on May 7, as Shelley's health was being affected by the Roman air, and the physicians had "prognosticated" beneficial results for him from a Neapolitan summer. On May 7 we read that Shelley's old acquaintance, Miss Curran, then at Rome, had begun to paint that familiar portrait of him, which is now in the National Portrait Gallery. Their departure was therefore postponed until June 7, but on that day their little boy Willy died of a fever. Mrs. Shelley's grief and melancholy at the loss of her only surviving child no doubt made them think of their friends the Gisbornes at Leghorn, for which place they departed on June 10.

what will be most inviting to you, you will give much, though you may receive but little, pleasure.

But whilst I write this with more desire than hope, yet some of that, perhaps the project may fall into your designs. It is intolerable to think of your being buried at Livorno. The success assured by Mr. Reveley's talents requires another scene. You may have decided to take this summer to consider—and why not with us at Naples, rather than at Livorno?

I could address with respect to Naples, the words of Polypheme in Theocritus, to all the friends I wish to see, and you especially :

Ἐξένθοις, Γαλίτεια, καὶ ἐξενθοῖσα λάθοιο,  
Ὡσπερ ἐγὼ νῦν ᾧδε καθήμενος, οἰκάδ' ἀπενθεῖν.<sup>1</sup>

Most sincerely yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

### 318. TO LEIGH HUNT<sup>2</sup>

ROME,

May 29, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I inscribe with your name, from a distant country, and after an absence whose months have seemed years, this the latest of my literary efforts.

Those writings which I have hitherto published, have been little else than visions which impersonate my own apprehensions of the beautiful and the just. I can also perceive in them the literary defects incidental to youth and impatience; they are dreams of what ought to be, or may be. The drama which I now present to you is a sad reality. I lay aside the presumptuous attitude of an instructor,

<sup>1</sup> "Come, O Galatea; and having come, forget, as do I, now sitting here, to return home."—Mrs. Shelley's translation.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley's dedication to "The Cenci," which he had begun after completing the first three acts of "Prometheus Unbound."

and am content to paint, with such colours as my own heart furnishes, that which has been.

Had I known a person more highly endowed than yourself with all that it becomes a man to possess, I had solicited for this work the ornament of his name. One more gentle, honourable, innocent and brave ; one of more exalted toleration for all who do and think evil, and yet himself more free from evil ; one who knows better how to receive, and how to confer a benefit, though he must ever confer far more than he can receive ; one of simpler, and, in the highest sense of the word, of purer life and manners I never knew : and I had already been fortunate in friendships when your name was added to the list.

In that patient and irreconcilable enmity with domestic and political tyranny and imposture, which the tenor of your life has illustrated, and which, had I the health and talents, should illustrate mine, let us, comforting each other in our task, live and die.

All happiness attend you !

Your affectionate friend,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

### 319. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

ROME,

June 8, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Yesterday, after an illness of only a few days, my little William died.<sup>1</sup> There was no hope from the moment of the attack. You will be kind enough to tell all my friends, so that I need not write to them. It is a great exertion

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<sup>1</sup> The entry in Clare Clairmont's diary, "Monday, June 7, at noonday," probably denotes the hour of William Shelley's death. He was interred in the English burial-ground at Rome, near the Porta San Paolo. On Thursday, June 10, Shelley, Mary and Clare left Rome for Leghorn.—Dowden's "Shelley," II, 268-9.



to me to write this, and it seems to me as if, hunted by calamity as I have been, that I should never recover any cheerfulness again.

If the things Mary desired to be sent to Naples have not been shipped, send them to Livorno.

We leave this city for Livorno to-morrow morning, where we have written to take lodgings for a month. I will then write again.

Yours ever affectionately,

P. B. SHELLEY.

## XV. VILLA VALSOVANO. "THE CENCI"

June 20—September 27, 1819

At Leghorn—"Nightmare Abbey"—Seythrop's Tower—Mr. Furnivall—"The Cenci"—Calderon—William Shelley's Monument—"Prometheus Unbound"—"Julian and Maddalo"—Mr. Gisborne—Leigh Hunt's Portrait—Charles Lamb—Raphael and Michael Angelo—Oliver's Novel—The Peterloo Affair—Henry Reveley—Italian Literature.

### 320. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

LIVORNO,

June [20 or 21<sup>st</sup>], 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

Our melancholy journey finishes at this town,<sup>2</sup> but we retrace our steps to Florence, where, as I imagine, we shall remain some months. O that I could return to England! How heavy a weight when misfortune is added to exile,

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<sup>1</sup> The London postmark was July 6, and Peacock suggests that the above is a likely date of the letter.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Shelley says that they left Rome anxious to escape a spot associated too intimately with the presence and loss of their only child. "Some friends of ours [the Gisbornes] were residing in the neighbourhood of Leghorn, and we took a small house, Villa Valsovano [for three months], about half-way between the town and Monte Nero, where we remained during the summer. Our villa was situated in the middle of a podere; the peasants sang as they worked beneath our windows, during the heats of a very hot season, and in the evening the water-wheel creaked as the process of irrigation went on, and the fire-flies flashed from among the myrtle hedges: nature was bright, sunshiny, and cheerful, or diversified by storms of a majestic terror, such as we had never before witnessed. At the top of the house, there was a sort of terrace. There is often such in Italy, generally roofed. This one was very small, yet not only roofed but glazed; this Shelley made his study; it looked out on a wide prospect of fertile country, and commanded a view of the near sea. The storms that sometimes varied our day showed themselves most picturesquely as they were driven across the ocean;

and solitude, as if the measure were not full, heaped high on both. O that I could return to England! I hear you say, "Desire never fails to generate capacity." Ah! but that ever-present Malthus, Necessity, has convinced Desire that even though it generated capacity, its offspring must starve. Enough of melancholy! "Nightmare Abbey," though no cure, is a palliative. I have just received the parcel which contained it, and at the same time the *Examiners*, by the way of Malta. I am delighted with "Nightmare Abbey." I think Scythrop<sup>1</sup> a character admirably conceived and executed; and I know not how to praise sufficiently the lightness, chastity, and strength of the language of the whole. It perhaps exceeds all your works in this. The catastrophe is excellent. I suppose the moral is contained in what Falstaff says—"For God's sake, talk like a man of this world;" and yet, looking deeper into it, is not the misdirected enthusiasm of Scythrop what J. C. calls the "salt of the earth?" My friends the Gisbornes here admire and delight in it exceedingly.

I think I told you that they (especially the lady) are people of high cultivation. She is a woman of profound accomplishments and the most refined taste.

Cobbett still more and more delights me, with all my horror of the sanguinary commonplaces of his creed. His design to overthrow banknotes by forgery is very comic. One of the volumes of Birkbeck interested me exceedingly.

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sometimes the dark lurid clouds dipped towards the waves, and became water-spouts, that churned up the water beneath, as they were chased onward, and scattered by the tempest. At other times the dazzling sunlight and heat made it almost intolerable to every other; but Shelley basked in both, and his health and spirits revived under their influence. In this airy cell he wrote the principal part of 'The Cenci.' Shelley refers to it in the following letters as "Scythrop's Tower." Clare notes in her journal that they arrived at Livorno on June 17, stayed there a week, saw the Gisbornes, and removed to Villetta Valsovano.

<sup>1</sup> Peacock states that Shelley took to himself the character of Scythrop in "Nightmare Abbey," but he does not say whether he intended in any respect to portray Shelley in the character.

The letters I think stupid, but suppose that they are useful.

I do not, as usual, give you an account of my journey, for I had neither the health nor the spirit to take notes. My health was greatly improving, when watching and anxiety cast me into a relapse. The Doctor (I put little faith in the best) tells me I must spend the winter in Africa or Spain. I shall of course, prefer the latter, if I choose either.

Are you married, or why do I not hear from you? *That* were a good reason.

Mary and Clare unite with me in kindest remembrances to you, and in congratulations, if she exist, to the new married lady.

When shall I see you again?—Ever most faithfully, yours,  
P. B. S.

Pray do not forget Mary's things.

I have not heard from you since the middle of April.

### 321. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

LIVORNO,

July 6, 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I have lost some letters, and, in all probability, at least one from you, as I can account in no other manner for not having heard from you since your letter dated March 26th, especially as you must know my anxiety to be informed that the mistake which it announced to me had been rectified. We have changed our design of going to Florence immediately, and are now established for three months in a little country house in a pretty verdant scene near Livorno.

I have a study here in a tower, something like Scythrop's, where I am just beginning to recover the faculties of reading and writing. My health, whenever no Libeccio blows, improves. From my tower I see the sea, with its islands, Gorgona, Capraja, Elba and Corsica, on one side,

and the Apennines on the other. Milly<sup>1</sup> surprised us the other day by first discovering a comet, on which we have been speculating. She may "make a stir, like a great astronomer."<sup>1</sup>

The direct purpose of this letter, however, is to ask you about the box which I requested you to send to me at Naples.<sup>2</sup> If it has been sent, let me entreat you (for really it is of the most serious consequence to us) to write to me by return of post, stating the name of the ship, the bill of lading, etc., so that I may get it without difficulty. If it has not been sent, do me the favour to send it instantly, direct to Livorno. If you have not the time, you can ask Hogg. If you cannot get the things from Mrs. Hunt (a possible case), send those you were to buy, and the things from Furnival<sup>3</sup> alone. You can add what books you think

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<sup>1</sup> A servant that Mrs. Shelley had brought from Marlow, who remained in her service until December, 1819. Shelley is quoting from Wordsworth's poem, "To the Little Celandine."

Eyes of some men travel far  
For the finding of a star:  
Up and down the heavens they go,  
Men that make a mighty rout:  
I'm as great as they, I trow,  
Since the day I found thee out,  
Little flower! I'll make a stir,  
Like a great astronomer.

<sup>2</sup> There are several references in Shelley's correspondence to this missing box, which appears to have contained Mrs. Shelley's desk. In a note to Ollier from Naples, Feb. 27, 1819 (misdated, 1818), Shelley says: "Pray let me hear from you (addressed to Rome) on the several subjects of my last letter, and especially to inform me of the name of the Ship and the mode of address by which my box was sent. . . ." In another letter to Ollier, undated, but apparently written about July, 1821, he speaks of the loss as a serious one.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. George Frederick Furnivall was a surgeon at Egham who attended Mary (in the absence of Dr. Pope, of Staines,) at the birth of her second child. Shelley had great confidence in Furnivall, who would sometimes ride from Egham to Marlow, a distance of seventeen miles, to visit the poet. His son, Dr. Frederick James Furnivall, tells me that it was the habit of his father to destroy all correspondence, and that he found none of Shelley's letters among his papers. One of the last notes that Mr. Furnivall received from Shelley was from Italy respecting Mary Shelley's health. On

fit. The last parcel I have received from you is that of last September.

All good wishes, and many hopes that you have already that success on which there will be no congratulations more disinterested than those you will receive from me.

Ever most sincerely yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

I shall receive your letter, if written by return of post, in thirty days: a distance less formidable than Rome or Naples.

### 322. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

LIVORNO,

July, 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

We still remain and shall remain nearly two months longer at Livorno. Our house is a melancholy one<sup>1</sup> and only cheered by letters from England. I got your note, in which you speak of three letters having been sent to Naples, which I have written for. I have heard also from H——, <sup>2</sup> who confirms the news of your success, an intelligence most grateful to me.

The object of the present letter is to ask a favour of you. I have written a tragedy, on the subject of a story well

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examining his father's consultation books Dr. Furnivall discovered Shelley's name, not in the book devoted to the richer folk, but in a small book recording visits to his poorer patients, and against the poet's account of some seven guineas, the doctor had noted the receipt of one guinea. It is quite likely that he may have refused to accept any further fee from Shelley, for whom he had a great liking.

<sup>1</sup> On account of little William Shelley's death and Mary's melancholy state of mind at her loss.

<sup>2</sup> This initial may stand for either Hunt or Hogg: they both appear to have acquainted Shelley of Peacock's appointment in the India House. In a letter to Mary Shelley, March 9, 1819, Hunt says of Peacock, "We joke him upon his new oriental grandeur, his Brahminical learning, and his inevitable tendencies to be one of the corrupt, upon which he seems to apprehend Shelleian oburgation. It is an honour to him that 'prosperity' sits on him well."

known in Italy, and, in my conception, eminently dramatic.<sup>1</sup> I have taken some pains to make my play fit for representation, and those who have already seen it judge favourably. It is written without any of the peculiar feelings and opinions which characterise my other compositions; I having attended simply to the impartial development of such characters as it is probable the persons represented really were, together with the greatest degree of popular effect to be produced by such a development. I send you a translation of the Italian manuscript on which my play is founded, the chief subject of which I have touched very delicately; for my principal doubt, as to whether it would succeed as an acting play, hangs entirely on the question as to whether such a thing as incest in this shape, however treated, would be admitted on the stage. I think, however, it will form no objection: considering, first, that the facts are matter of history; and, secondly, the peculiar delicacy with which I have treated it.

I am exceedingly interested in the question of whether this attempt of mine will succeed or no. I am strongly inclined to the affirmative at present, founding my hopes on this, that, as a composition, it is certainly not inferior to any of the modern plays that have been acted, with the exception of "Remorse;"<sup>2</sup> that the interests of its plot is incredibly greater and more real; and that there is nothing beyond what the multitude are contented to believe

<sup>1</sup> "The Cenci, / A Tragedy, / in five acts. / By Percy B. Shelley / Italy. / Printed for C. and J. Ollier, / Vere Street, Bond Street, London. / 1819." Shelley had read the MS. on which the tragedy is founded at Leghorn in May, 1818, and he tells Peacock in his letter of August 22, 1819, that his work on it "was done in two months." His dedication to Leigh Hunt is dated Rome, May 29 (see p. 690), and the first rough draft was finished on August 8, 1819. He had 250 copies of "The Cenci" struck off, probably, as Prof. Dowden suggests, at the printing office of Masi, a Leghorn printer who had issued, among other English books, Eustace's "Classical Tour Through Italy," 1817.

<sup>2</sup> Coleridge's tragedy, "Remorse," was produced at Drury Lane Theatre on Jan. 23rd, 1813, and ran for twenty nights.

that they can understand, either in imagery, opinion, or sentiment. I wish to preserve a complete incognito, and can trust to you, that whatever else you do, you will at least favour me on this point. Indeed this is essential, deeply essential to its success. After it had been acted, and successfully (could I hope such a thing), I would own it if I pleased, and use the celebrity it might acquire to my own purposes.

What I want you to do is, to procure for me its presentation at Covent Garden.<sup>1</sup> The principal character, Beatrice, is precisely fitted for Miss O'Neil, and it might even seem written for her (God forbid that I should ever see her play it—it would tear my nerves to pieces,) and, in all respects, it is fitted only for Covent Garden. The chief male character, I confess, I should be very unwilling that anyone but Kean should play—that is impossible, and I must be contented with an inferior actor. I think you know some of the people of that theatre, or, at least, some one who knows them; and when you have read the play, you may say enough, perhaps, to induce them not to reject it without consideration—but of this, perhaps, I may judge from the tragedies which they have accepted, there is no danger at any rate.

Write to me as soon as you can on this subject, because it is necessary that I should present it, or, if rejected by the theatre, print it this coming season; lest somebody

<sup>1</sup> "The Cenci" was offered to Covent Garden and refused. Mrs. Shelley says that Mr. Harris of Covent Garden pronounced the subject of the play "to be so objectionable, that he could not even submit the part to Miss O'Neil for perusal, but expressed his desire that the author would write a tragedy on some other subject, which he would gladly accept." In a letter to Miss Curran from Leghorn, Sep. 18, 1819, she says with reference to the improbability of the play being a success if produced, that "his sister-in-law [Eliza Westbrook] alone would hire enough people to damn it." (Dowden's "Shelley," II, 280). A performance of Shelley's tragedy was given by the Shelley Society at the Grand Theatre, Islington, on May 7, 1886; Miss Alma Murray (Mrs. Alfred Forman) playing the title rôle.



else should get hold of it, as the story, which now only exists in manuscript, begins to be generally known among the English. The translation which I send you is to be prefixed to the play, together with a print of Beatrice. I have a copy of her picture by Guido, now in the Colonna palace at Rome—the most beautiful creature you can conceive.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, you will not show the manuscript to anyone—and write to me by return of post, at which time the play will be ready to be sent.

I expect soon to write again, and it shall be a less selfish letter. As to Ollier, I don't know what has been published, or what has arrived at his hands.—My "Prometheus," though ready, I do not send till I know more.

Ever yours, most faithfully,

P. B. S.

323. TO CHARLES AND JAMES OLLIER  
(London)

[Postmark], LIVORNO,

[English postmark, August 3, 1819.]

DEAR SIR,

Have you received an MS. sent from Naples?

Yours obed.,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[This letter is addressed by Mrs. Shelley to]

Messrs. Ollier to the care of

Thomas Peacock, Esq.,

India House, London,

Inglaterra.

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<sup>1</sup> Mary Shelley states in her journal that she and Shelley saw the portrait of Beatrice Cenci at the Colonna Palace on April 22, 1819. It is now in the Barberini Palace. The picture is wrongly described as a portrait of Beatrice Cenci by Guido, as he did not paint in Rome until nine years after her death. Shelley did not include the portrait in his book, as he found the cost of engraving it too expensive.

## 324. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON HOGG

LIVORNO,

July 25, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your letter was very welcome to me, and the idea of meeting you on my return to England takes a chief place in the many motives which urge me to retrace my steps.—Our misfortune is, indeed, a heavy one.—Your little favourite<sup>1</sup> had improved greatly both in mind and body before that fatal fever seized him. He had lost all shade of ill-temper, and had become affectionate and sensible to an extraordinary degree, his spirits had a very unusual vivacity—it was impossible to find a creature more gentle and intelligent.—His health and strength appeared to be perfect; and his beauty, the silken fineness of his hair, the transpance of his complexion, the animation and deep blue colour of his eyes were the astonishment of everyone. The Italian women used to bring each other to look at him when he was asleep. On my return from an excursion to Albano I found him only a little indisposed, and in less than a fortnight he died. By the skill of the physician he was once reanimated after the process of death had actually commenced, and he lived four days after that time. This was, as you may think, a terrible reprieve. I had been slowly recovering a certain degree of health until this event, which has left me in a very weak state,—and Mary bears it, as you may naturally imagine, worse than I do.

Peacock's success gives me the highest gratification, though I am yet unacquainted with the particulars of it. I shall find them in some letters which have been misdirected to Naples. You may believe how much I should be interested in any details in your own progress in a profession "where the race, indeed, is not to the swift"—

William Shelley.

though "the battle be to the strong," lamenting as I do that I cannot be present to contemplate and cheer your endeavours. Though I am afraid that altered as I am by suffering and illness, I should only be fit to sleep the winter evenings. I am afraid, too, your long walks I could not support, and ought not to attempt, and that in a water-party I should be unfit for anything but ballast. I am glad you continue to like Hunt, he has a most friendly heart; as I hear nothing from him of money difficulties I hope that your conjecture in that respect is groundless. Your judgment of Coulson<sup>1</sup> makes me wish to know him better.

I have of late read little Greek. I have read Homer again and some plays of Æschylus and Sophocles, and some lives of Plutarch this spring—that is all. Let me recommend you who know Spanish to read some plays of their great dramatic genius Calderon. I have been reading "*La Devocion della Cruz*" and the "*Purgatorio di San Patricio*,"<sup>2</sup> in both of which you will find specimens of the very highest dramatic power—approaching Shakespeare, and in his character. The "*Principe Constante*" they say is also very fine. We have a house very near the Gisbornes, and it is from Mrs. Gisborne that I learnt Spanish enough to read these plays. She is a very amiable and accomplished woman about forty-five and resembles Mrs. Boinville in her acquirements, her freedom from certain prejudices and the gentleness of her manners,

<sup>1</sup> Walter Coulson (1794?–1860), a Cornish lawyer and journalist; a friend of Leigh Hunt, Charles Lamb, and T. L. Peacock, who introduced him to Shelley at Marlow. In Hunt's letter to Mary Shelley of March 9, 1819, from York Buildings, New Road, quoted above, he says: "Coulson is a good deal here. . . . Hogg and Peacock generally live here every Sunday, when the former is not on circuit; and we pass very pleasant afternoons talking of mythology and the Greeks, and our old friends. Hogg, I think, has a good heart as well as wit."

<sup>2</sup> A slip of Shelley's pen for "*La Devocion de la Cruz*," and "*El Purgatorio de San Patricio*."

though she does not approach our lost friend in the elegance and delicate sensibility of her mind. We see her every evening; the husband is of the Erymanthian breed, and the son (of whom we see little) a very excellent person, I believe, and a good engineer.—I have a little room here like Scythrop's tower, at the top of the house, commanding a view of the sea and the Apennines, and the plains between them. The vine-dressers are singing all day *mi rivedrai, ti revedrò*,<sup>1</sup> but by no means in an operatic style. Here I write and read.

With the most earnest wish for your success and happiness, and that your lot may be, in all respects but one, most unlike mine, believe me, my dear friend,

Most affectionately yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

325. TO AMELIA CURRAN  
(Rome)

LIVORNO,

August 5, 1819.

MY DEAR MISS CURRAN,

I ought to have written to you some time ago, but my ill spirits and ill health has for ever furnished me with an excuse for delaying till to-morrow. I fear that you still continue too capable of justly estimating my apology.

A thousand thanks for your kind attention to my request. I have considered the drawings, and neither of them, nor indeed, perhaps any attempt at *sculpture*, seems to me fit for the purpose. I strongly incline to prefer an unornamented pyramid of white marble, as of the most durable

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Shelley also refers to the songs of the vine-dressers in her letter to Mrs. Leigh Hunt of August 28, 1819. "They sing, not very melodiously, but very loud, Rossini's music, 'Mi rivedrai ti revedrò,' and they are accompanied by the *cicala*, a kind of little beetle, that makes a noise with its tail as loud as Johnny can sing."

form and the simplest appearance, but, if you will permit, I will send you my decision soon. You have too much goodness not to excuse on such a subject the trouble which I give you. I will send at the same time the inscription.<sup>1</sup>

Mary's spirits still continue wretchedly depressed, more so than a stranger (tho' perhaps I ought not to call you so) could imagine. We live, seeing no one but one lady who is agreeable.<sup>2</sup> We think, but as yet only think, of Rome for the winter.

I have nearly finished my "Cenci," which Mary likes. I wish very much to get a good *engraving* made of the picture<sup>3</sup> in the Colonna Palace, and to have the plate by this Autumn. How much time and money would a first-rate Roman artist demand for such a work? Dare I ask you to add to the amount of so many favours which must be so long unrepaid that of charging yourself with such a kindness?

What we owe to you in possessing the Picture is more than I can express. May I hope that some day will arrive on which it will be possible to find other expressions for it than words!

Let us hear of your health and spirits, and be they better.

Most sincerely yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

Could you be kind enough—Mary says—as to send any drawings of simple monumental forms, such as you

<sup>1</sup> Shelley, who thanks Miss Curran in this letter for the picture of his little boy, William, had asked her to design a monument for his grave in the English burial-ground at Rome. The actual position of his grave is now unknown. Prof. Dowden says that "Shelley and Mary were unable to superintend the erection of the tombstone, which was wrongly placed over the body of an adult. This was discovered when it was desired to move the child's body and bring it beside his father's ashes in the new cemetery."

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Gisborne.

<sup>3</sup> The portrait of Beatrice Cenci.

consider beautiful as well as durable? I incline to a mere pyramid.

## 326. TO LEIGH HUNT

(London)

LIVORNO,

August 15, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

How good of you to write to us so often, and such kind letters! But it is like lending to a beggar. What can I offer in return?

Though surrounded by suffering and disquietude, and, latterly, almost overcome by our strange misfortune,<sup>1</sup> I have not been idle. My "Prometheus" is finished, and I am also on the eve of completing another work,<sup>2</sup> totally different from anything you might conjecture that I should write; of a more popular kind; and, if anything of mine could deserve attention, of higher claims. "Be innocent of the knowledge, dearest chuck, till thou approve the performance."

I send you a little poem<sup>3</sup> to give to Ollier for publication, but *without my name*. Peacock will correct the proofs. I wrote it with the idea of offering it to the *Examiner*, but I find that it is too long. It was composed last year at Este; two of the characters you will recognise; the third is also in some degree a painting from nature, but, with respect to time and place, ideal. You will find the little piece, I think, in some degree consistent with your

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<sup>1</sup> This letter is apparently a reply to Leigh Hunt's of July, 1819 (Leigh Hunt's correspondence, Vol. I, p. 130), in which he condoles with Shelley on the death of his little boy, William Shelley.

<sup>2</sup> "The Cenci."

<sup>3</sup> "Julian and Maddalo: a Conversation," which remained unpublished until 1824, when it was inserted by Mary Shelley in her husband's "Posthumous Poems." It is hardly necessary to say that the two characters, Julian and Maddalo, represented Shelley and Byron. (See p. 622.)

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own ideas of the manner in which poetry ought to be written. I have employed a certain familiar style of language to express the actual way in which people talk with each other, whom education and a certain refinement of sentiment have placed above the use of the vulgar idioms. I use the word *vulgar* in its most extensive sense. The vulgarity of rank and fashion is as gross in its way as that of Poverty, and its cant terms equally expressive of bare conceptions, and therefore equally unfit for Poetry. Not that the familiar style is to be admitted in the treatment of a subject wholly ideal, or in that part of any subject which relates to common life, where the passion, exceeding a certain limit, touches the boundaries of that which is ideal. Strong passion expresses itself in metaphor, borrowed from objects alike remote or near, and casts over all the shadow of its own greatness. But what am I about? If my grandmother sucks eggs, was it I who taught her?

If *you* would really correct the proof, I need not trouble Peacock, who, I suppose, has enough. Can you take it as a compliment that I prefer to trouble you?

I don't particularly wish this poem to be known as mine: but, at all events, I would not put my name to it. I leave you to judge whether it is best to throw it into the fire, or to publish it. So much for self—*self*, that burr that will stick to one. I can't get it off, yet. Your kind expressions about my Eclogue<sup>1</sup> gave me great pleasure; indeed, my great stimulus in writing, is to have the approbation of those who feel kindly towards me. The rest is mere duty. I am also delighted to hear that you think of us and form fancies about us. We cannot yet come home.

Mary's spirits continue dreadfully depressed, and I cannot expose her to Godwin in this state. I wrote to this hard-hearted person (the first letter I had written for a year), on account of the terrible state of her mind, and entreated

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<sup>1</sup> "Rosalind and Helen: a Modern Eclogue," 1818, which Leigh Hunt had praised warmly in the *Examiner*.

him to try to soothe her in his next letter. The *very* next letter, received yesterday, and addressed to her, called her husband (me) "a disgraceful and flagrant person"—tried to persuade her that I was under great engagements to give him *more* money (after having given him £4,700), and urged her if she ever wished a connection to continue between him and her to force me to get money for him. He cannot persuade her that I am what I am not, nor place a shade of enmity between her and me—but he heaps on her misery, stiff misery. I have not yet shewn her the letter—but I must. I doubt whether I ought not to expose this solemn lie ; for such and not a man is Godwin. But I shall as is our custom (I mean yours and mine), err on the side of patience and endurance. I suspect my character, if measured with his, would sustain no diminution among those who know us both.—I have bought bitter knowledge with £4,700. I wish it were all yours now !

The title of your Tragedy<sup>1</sup>, and the subject of it ? and what dunces to accept such things and refuse yours ! No parcel, no pocket books, no pictures are yet arrived. Just cross-examine Ollier about it—I know nothing from Ollier—is he yet friendly with you ?<sup>2</sup> You know the mind of most of the inhabitants of this earth is like the moon, or rather the wind, and if you know it is thus to-day it is no sign that it will be thus to-morrow. If reasons which you think good make you wish me to employ another bookseller, or not employ him—say so and do so. Otherwise I have no wish to change even a lazy bookseller.

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<sup>1</sup> Leigh Hunt's tragedy was rejected both by Kean at Drury Lane and the manager of Covent Garden Theatre.

<sup>2</sup> In an unpublished letter to Ollier, written in 1820, Shelley asked him if he has had any difference with Leigh Hunt, and if so whether the advance that he proposed (before he left England) that Ollier should make to Hunt, was the cause of it. Hunt speaks in a letter to Mrs. Shelley (12 Sept., 1819) of an advance of £200 from Ollier, which was liquidated by the sale of the copyright of the "Literary Pocket Book."



No letter from Bessie or Marianne.

No news either of things Mary wants. Now that's not kind, Marianne. However, I send you my love and all of you

[The signature has been cut off.]

You see by what I say about Godwin that I don't [shew ?] this letter to Mary.

### 327. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

LIVORNO,

August (probably 22), 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I ought first to say that I have not yet received one of your letters from Naples ; in Italy such things are difficult, but your present letter tells me all that I could desire to hear of your situation.

My employments are these : I awaken usually at seven ; read half-an-hour ; then get up ; breakfast ; after breakfast ascend *my tower*, and read or write until two. Then we dine. After dinner I read Dante with Mary, gossip a little, eat grapes and figs, sometimes walk, though seldom, and at half-past five pay a visit to Mrs. Gisborne, who reads Spanish with me until near seven. We then come for Mary, and stroll about till supper time. Mrs. Gisborne is a sufficiently amiable and very accomplished woman ; she is δημοκρατικη and αθη—how far she may be φιλανθρωπη<sup>1</sup> I don't know, for she is the antipodes of enthusiasm. Her husband, a man with little thin lips, receding forehead, and a prodigious nose, is an excessive bore. His nose is something quite Slawkenbergian<sup>2</sup>—it weighs on the imagination to look at it,—it is that sort of nose which transforms all the g's its wearer utters into k's. It is a

<sup>1</sup> An echo of Shelley's inscription in the travellers' album at Montanvert. See p. 514.

<sup>2</sup> See "Tristram Shandy," Book IV.

nose once seen never to be forgotten, and which requires the utmost stretch of Christian charity to forgive. I, you know, have a little turn-up nose; Hogg has a large hook one; but add them both together, square them, cube them, you would have but a faint idea of the nose to which I refer.

I most devoutly wish that I were living near London.—I don't think I shall settle so far off as Richmond; and to inhabit any intermediate spot on the Thames would be to expose myself to the river damp; not to mention that it is not much to my taste.—My inclinations point to Hampstead; but I don't know whether I should not make up my mind to something more completely suburban. What are mountains trees, heaths, or even the glorious and ever-beautiful sky, with such sunsets as I have seen at Hampstead, to friends? Social enjoyment, in some form or other, is the alpha and the omega of existence. All that I see in Italy—and from my tower window I now see the magnificent peaks of the Apennine half enclosing the plain—is nothing; it dwindles to smoke in the mind, when I think of some familiar forms of scenery, little perhaps in themselves, over which old remembrances have thrown a delightful colour. How we prize what we despised when present! So the ghosts of our dead associations rise and haunt us, in revenge for our having let them starve, and abandoned them to perish.

You don't tell me if you see the Boinvilles, nor are they included in the list of the *conviti* at the monthly symposium. I will attend it in imagination.

One thing, I own, I am curious about; and in the chance of the letters not coming from Naples, pray tell me. What is it you do at the India House? Hunt writes, and says you have got a *situation* in the India House. Hogg that you have an *honourable employment*. Godwin writes to Mary that you have got *so much or so much*: but nothing of what you *do*. The Devil take these general terms. Not content with having driven all poetry out of the world, at length they make war upon their own allies—nay,

their very parents—dry facts. If it had not been the age of generalities, any one of these people would have told me what you did.<sup>1</sup>

I have been much better these last three weeks. My work on "The Cenci," which was done in two months, was a fine antidote to nervous medicines, and kept up, I think, the pain in my side, as sticks do a fire. Since then, I have materially improved. I do not walk enough. Clare, who is sometimes my companion, sometimes does not dress in exactly the right time.—I have no stimulus to walk.—Now, I go sometimes to Livorno on business; and that does me good.

England seems to be in a very disturbed state, if we may judge by some Paris Papers. I suspect it is rather over-rated . . . but when I hear them talk of paying in gold—nay, I dare say take steps towards it, confess that the sinking fund is a fraud, etc., I no longer wonder. But the change should commence among the higher orders, or anarchy will only be the last flash before despotism. I wonder and tremble.—*You* are well sheltered in the East India Company. No change could possibly touch you.

I have been reading Calderon in Spanish.—A kind of Shakespeare is this Calderon; and I have some thoughts if I find that I cannot do anything better, of translating some of his plays and some Greek ones besides—but my head is full of all sorts of plans.

The *Examiners* I receive. Hunt, as a political writer, pleases me more and more. Adieu. Mary and Clare send their best remembrances. Your most faithful friend,

P. B. SHELLEY.

Pray send me some books, and Clare would take it as a great favour if you would send her *music books*.

<sup>1</sup> "I did my best to satisfy his curiosity on this subject; but it was in letters to Naples, which he had left before they arrived, and he never received them. I observed that this was the case with the greater portion of the letters which arrived at any town in Italy after he had left it."—T. L. Peacock's note.

328. TO LEIGH HUNT  
(London)

LIVORNO,

Sep[tember] 3, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

At length has arrived Ollier's parcel, and with it the portrait.<sup>1</sup> What a delightful present! It is almost yourself, and we sat talking with it, and of it, all the evening. There wants nothing but that deepest and most earnest look with which you sometimes draw aside the inner veil of your nature when you talk with us, and the liquid lustre of your eyes. But it is an admirable portrait and admirably expresses you,—it is a great pleasure to us to possess it,—a pleasure in time of need, coming to us when there are few others. How we wish it were you, and not your picture! How I wish that we were with you!

This parcel, you know, and all its letters, are now a year old—some older. There are all kinds of dates, from March to August 18, and "your date," to use *Shakspeare's* expression, "is better in your pie or your pudding, than in your" letter:—"Virginity" Parolles says, but letters are the same thing in another shape.<sup>2</sup>

With it came, too, Lamb's Works.<sup>3</sup>—I have looked at

<sup>1</sup> This portrait is apparently no longer in existence. It was a half-length chalk drawing by Wildman, Thornton Hunt's drawing-master. Mrs. Leigh Hunt writes of this portrait on August 4, 1818, in a letter to Mrs. Shelley, "as large as life. . . . It is one of the most astonishing likenesses that ever was seen; you would almost think it was going to speak to you; and the execution, as a drawing, equals the likeness."

<sup>2</sup> What Parolles really says is "Your date is better in your pie or your porridge than in your cheek." ("All's Well that Ends Well," I, i.)

<sup>3</sup> "The / works / of / Charles Lamb / in two volumes, / London : Printed for C. & J. Ollier, / Vere Street, Bond Street. / 1818," containing besides "Rosamund Gray," some essays, and poems. The volumes contained none of the *Essays of Elia*, the first series of which was not published until 1823. Leigh Hunt, in a letter to Shelley (Sept. 6, 1819) says that "I showed Lamb that passage about his 'Rosamund,' upon which he said with the greatest air of sincerity, 'I am proud of it.'"

none of the other books yet.—What a lovely thing is his “Rosamund Gray,” how much knowledge of the sweetest and deepest parts of our nature is in it! When I think of such a mind as Lamb’s—when I see how unnoticed remain things of such exquisite and complete perfection, what should I hope for myself, if I had not higher objects in view than fame?—

I have seen too little of Italy, and of Pictures. Perhaps Peacock has shown you some of my letters to him. But at Rome I was very ill, seldom able to go out without a carriage: and though I kept horses for two months there, yet there is so much to see. Perhaps I attended more to Sculpture than Painting, its form being more easily intelligible than those of the latter. Yet, I saw the famous works of *Raphael*, whom I agree with the whole world in thinking the finest painter, why, I can tell you another time. With respect to *Michael Angelo* I dissent, and think with astonishment and indignation of the common notion that he equals, and in some respects, exceeds Raphael. He seems to me to have no sense of moral dignity and loveliness; and the *energy* for which he has been so much praised, appears to me to be a certain rude, external, mechanical quality, in comparison with anything possessed by Raphael—or even much inferior artists. His famous painting in the Sixtine Chapel seems to me deficient in beauty and majesty, both in the conception and the execution. It might have contained all the forms of terror and delight—and it is a dull and wicked emblem of a dull and wicked thing. Jesus Christ is like an angry pot-boy, and God like an old alehouse-keeper looking out of window. He has been called the *Dante* of painting; but if we find some of the gross and strong outlines which are employed in the few most distasteful passages of the “*Inferno*,” where shall we find *your* Francesca<sup>1</sup>, where the Spirit coming over the sea in a boat, like Mars rising from the

<sup>1</sup> “*Your Francesca*”: a graceful compliment to Leigh Hunt’s poem, “*The Story of Rimini*,” 1816.

vapours of the horizon, where Matilda gathering flowers, and all the exquisite tenderness, and sensibility, and ideal beauty, in which *Dante* excelled all poets except *Shakspeare*?

As to *Michael Angelo's Moses*—but you have a cast of that in England.—I write these things, heaven knows why.

I have written something, and finished it, different from anything else, and a new attempt for me; and I mean to dedicate it to you.<sup>1</sup> I should not *have done so* without your approbation, but I asked your picture last night, and it smiled assent. If I did not think it in some degree worthy of you, I would not make you a public offering of it. I expect to have to write to you soon about it. If Ollier is not turned Jew, Christian, or become infected *with the Murrain*, he will publish it. Don't let him be frightened, for it is nothing which, by any courtesy of language, can be termed either moral or immoral.

Mary has written to Marianne for a parcel, in which I beg you make Ollier enclose what you know must interest me—your "Calendar,"<sup>2</sup> (a sweet extract from which I saw in the *Examiner*.) and the other poems belonging to you; and, for some friends of mine, my "Eclogue."<sup>3</sup> This parcel, which must be sent instantly, will reach me by October, but don't trust letters to it, except just a line or so. When you write, write by the post.

Your ever affectionate,

P. B. S.

My love to Marianne and Bessy, and Thornton<sup>4</sup> too, and

<sup>1</sup> "The Cenci," see p. 690.

<sup>2</sup> The "Calendar" was evidently the first volume of "The Literary Pocket Book," edited by Leigh Hunt, and published by Ollier from 1819 to 1822. The poems by Leigh Hunt would be "Hero and Leander," and "Bacchus and Ariadne," also published by Ollier in 1819.

<sup>3</sup> Shelley's "Rosalind and Helen: a Modern Eclogue," Ollier, 1818. Leigh Hunt writes to Shelley, July, 1819, that he rejoiced to find that Lamb was full of this poem.

<sup>4</sup> Thornton Leigh Hunt (1810-1873), Leigh Hunt's eldest son, author and journalist, whose article, "Shelley, by One who Knew Him," appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* for Feb., 1863.

Percy, etc., and if you could imagine any way in which I could be useful to them here, tell me. I will enquire about the Italian Chalk. You have no idea of the pleasure this portrait gives us.

[Addressed outside],  
LEIGH HUNT, Esq.,  
Examiner Office,  
19 Catherine Street,  
London.  
Angleterre.

329. TO CHARLES AND JAMES OLLIER  
(London)

LEGHORN,

September 6, 1819.

DEAR SIR,

I received your packet with Hunt's picture about a fortnight ago; and your letter with Nos. 1, 2, and 3 yesterday, but not No. 4, which is probably lost or mislaid, through the extreme irregularity of the Italian post.

The ill account you give of the success of my poetical attempts, sufficiently accounts for your silence; but I believe that the truth is, I write less for the public than for myself. Considering that perhaps the parcel will be another year on its voyage, I rather wish, if this letter arrives in time, that you would send the *Quarterly's* article<sup>1</sup> by the post, and the rest of the *Review* in the parcel. Of course, it gives me a certain degree of pleasure to know that

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<sup>1</sup> Ollier had told Shelley that the *Quarterly* intended reviewing him, and the review (of the "Revolt of Islam") duly appeared in the number for April, 1819. Medwin in his "Life of Shelley," Vol. I, 358, states that his friend, Lord Dillon, saw a young man in Delesert's reading-room at Florence, one day early in October, bent very earnestly over the *Review*; it was Shelley. When he came to the final page which contains the parallel between himself and the Egyptian king, he "burst into convulsive laughter, closed the book with an hysteric laugh, and hastily left the room, his Ha! Ha's! ringing down the stairs."—See Prof. Dowden's "Life of Shelley," Vol. II, p. 300.

anyone likes my writings; but it is objection and enmity alone that rouses my *curiosity*. My "Prometheus," which has been long finished, is now being transcribed, and will soon be forwarded to you for publication. It is, in my judgment, of a higher character than anything I have yet attempted, and is perhaps less an imitation of anything that has gone before it. I shall also send you another work, calculated to produce a very popular effect, and totally in a different style from anything I have yet composed. This will be sent already printed.<sup>1</sup> The "Prometheus" you will be so good as to print as usual.

Mrs. Shelley desires me to say, in answer to your kindly suggestions, that she does not mean to permit Lackingtons to make such terms<sup>2</sup> with her as before, but that if he [? they agree] agrees to her terms she does not feel herself justified in leaving them, as if she had published with you she would have used the same delicacy. I need not say that in case the Lackingtons are unreasonable, she would be influenced by my recommendation in giving you the refusal of her works.

In the "Rosalind and Helen," I see there are some few errors, which are so much the worse because they are errors in the sense. If there should be any danger of a second edition, I will correct them.

I have read your "Altham,"<sup>3</sup> and Keats's poem,<sup>4</sup> and Lamb's works. For the second in this list, much praise

<sup>1</sup> The work alluded to here, as being printed in Italy, was "The Cenci." In 1821 a second edition was printed in London and published by Ollier. With the exception of the unauthorised reprints of "Queen Mab," "The Cenci" was the only book of Shelley's that attained a second edition during his life-time.

<sup>2</sup> For the publication of her novel, "Castruccio, Prince of Lucca," published in 1823 under the title "Valperga."

<sup>3</sup> Charles Ollier's stories, "Altham and his Wife; a domestic tale," and "Inesilla."

<sup>4</sup> "Endymion: / a Poetic Romance. / By John Keats. / 'The Stretched metre of an antique song' / London: / Printed for Taylor and Hessey, / 93 Fleet Street, / 1818." Shelley acknowledges the receipt of "Altham" and Keats's poem in an undated letter to Ollier apparently written about August 20, 1819.



is due to me for having read it, the author's intention appearing to be that no person should possibly get to the end of it. Yet it is full of some of the highest and the finest gleams of poetry; indeed, everything seems to be viewed by the mind of a poet which is described in it. I think if he had printed about fifty pages of fragments from it, I should have been led to admire Keats as a poet more than I ought, of which there is now no danger. In "Altham" you have surprised and delighted me. It is a natural story, most unaffectedly told, and, what is more, told in a strain of very pure and powerful English, which is a very rare merit. You seem to have studied our language to some purpose; but I suppose I ought to have waited for "Inesilla."

The same day that your letter came, came the news of the Manchester work,<sup>1</sup> and the torrent of my indignation has not yet done boiling in my veins. I wait anxiously to hear how the country will express its sense of this bloody, murderous opposition of its destroyers. "Something must be done. What, yet I know not."

In your parcel (which I pray you to send in some safe manner, forwarding to me the bill of lading, etc., in a

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<sup>1</sup> On August 16, 1819, a reform meeting was held in St. Peter's Field, Manchester, presided over by Orator Hunt (no relation of Leigh Hunt), and attended by thousands of people. The meeting was pronounced to be illegal, and preparations were made to deal with it by providing a large body of constables, yeomanry, and hussars. No attempt, however, was made to seize Hunt until he was surrounded by a densely-packed crowd. And then, in endeavouring to disperse the meeting, some six people were killed, twenty or thirty were wounded by the sabres of the cavalry, and fifty or more received injuries in the charge of the hussars. Mrs. Shelley says that the news of the Manchester Massacre "roused in him violent emotions of indignation and compassion. The great truth that the many, if accordant and resolute, could control the few, as was shown some years after, made him long to teach his injured countrymen how to resist. Inspired by these feelings he wrote "The Masque of Anarchy." To a *facsimile* of the manuscript of this poem (now in Mr. T. J. Wise's collection), issued by the Shelley Society in 1887, Mr. H. Buxton Forman contributed an introduction in which the "Peterloo affair," as it was called, is fully described.

regular mechanical way, so that my parcel may come in six weeks, not twelve months) send me Jones's Greek Grammar and some sealing-wax.

Whenever I publish, send copies of my books to the following people from me :—Mr. Hunt, Mr. Peacock, Mr. Horace Smith, Mr. Godwin, Mr. Keats, Lord Byron (at Murray's), Mr. Hogg, Mr. Thomas Moore.

Your obliged and faithful,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

P.S.—The parcel must be taken to the wharf, the vessel that sails soonest for Leghorn be particularly enquired for, the parcel delivered to the Captain, a bill of lading taken, and despatched to us by next post.

[Addressed outside],

Messrs. OLLIER,

Booksellers,

Vere Street, Bond Street,

London, Inghilterra.

Angleterre.

[London postmark],

Sep. 21, 1819.

### 330. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

(London)

LIVORNO,

September 9, 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I send you the tragedy,<sup>1</sup> addressed to Stamford Street, fearing lest it might be inconvenient to receive such bulky packets at the India House. You will see that the subject has not been treated as you suggested, and why it was not susceptible of such treatment. In fact, it was then already printing when I received your letter, and it has been treated in such a manner that I do not see how the subject forms an objection. You know "Œdipus" is performed on the fastidious French stage, a play much

<sup>1</sup> "The Cenci."

more broad than this.<sup>1</sup> I confess I have some hopes, and some friends here persuade me that they are not unfounded.

Many thanks for your attention in sending the papers which contain the terrible and important news of Manchester. These are, as it were, the distant thunders of the terrible storm which is approaching. The tyrants here, as in the French Revolution, have first shed blood. May their execrable lessons not be learnt with equal docility! I still think there will be no coming to close quarters until financial affairs decidedly bring the oppressors and the oppressed together. Pray let me have the *earliest* political news which you consider of importance at this crisis.

Yours ever most faithfully,

P. B. S.

I send this to the India House the tragedy to Stamford Street.

331. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

LEGHORN,

September 21, 1819.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

You will have received a short letter sent with the tragedy, and the tragedy itself by this time. I am, you may believe, anxious to hear what you think of it, and how

<sup>1</sup> "The 'Œdipus' of Dryden and Lee was often performed in the last [the eighteenth] century; but never in my time. There is no subject of this class treated with such infinite skill and delicacy as in Alfieri's beautiful tragedy, 'Myrrha.' It was the character in which Madame Ristori achieved her great success in Paris; but she was prohibited from performing it in London. If the Covent Garden managers had accepted 'The Cenci' I doubt if the licenser would have permitted the performance." (Peacock's note.) It will be remembered that Shelley refers to a translation of "Myrrha," in which Mary was engaged, in his letter to her of Sept. 22, 1819.

the manager talks about it. I have printed in Italy 250 copies, because it costs, with all duties and freightage, about half what it would cost in London, and these copies will be sent by sea. My other reason was a belief that the seeing it in print would enable the people at the theatre to judge more easily. Since I last wrote to you, Mr. Gisborne is gone to England for the purpose of obtaining a situation for Henry Reveley. I have given him a letter to you, and you would oblige me by showing what civilities you can, and by forwarding his views, either by advice or recommendation, as you may find opportunity, not for his sake, who is a great bore, but for the sake of Mrs. Gisborne and Henry Reveley, people for whom we have a great esteem. Henry is a most amiable person, and has great talents as a mechanic and engineer. I have given him also a letter to Hunt, so that you will meet him there. This Mr. Gisborne is a man who knows I cannot tell how many languages, and has read almost all the books you can think of ; but all that they contain seems to be to his mind what water is to a sieve. His liberal opinions are all the reflections of Mrs. Gisborne's, a very amiable, accomplished, and completely unprejudiced woman.

Charles Clairmont is now with us on his way to Vienna. He has spent a year or more in Spain, where he has learnt Spanish, and I make him read Spanish all day long. It is a most powerful and expressive language, and I have already learnt sufficient to read with great ease their poet Calderon. I have read about 12 of his plays. Some of them certainly deserve to be ranked among the grandest and most perfect productions of the human mind. He exceeds all modern dramatists, with the exception of Shakespeare, whom he resembles, however, in the depth of thought and subtlety of imagination of his writings, and in the rare power of interweaving delicate and powerful comic traits with the most tragical situations, without diminishing their interest. I rate him far above Beaumont and Fletcher.

I have received all the papers you sent me, and the *Examiners* regularly, perfumed with muriatic acid. What an infernal business this of Manchester! What is to be done? Something assuredly. H. Hunt has behaved, I think, with great spirit and coolness in the whole affair.

I have sent you my "Prometheus," which I do not wish to be sent to Ollier for publication until I write to that effect. Mr. Gisborne will bring it, as also some volumes of Spenser, and the two last of Herodotus and "Paradise Lost," which may be put with the others.

If my play should be accepted, don't you think it would excite some interest, and take off the unexpected horror of the story, by showing that the events are real, if it could be made to appear in some paper in some form?

You will hear from me again shortly, as I send you by sea "The Cenci" printed, which you will be good enough to keep. Adieu.

Yours most faithfully,

P. B. SHELLEY.

### 332. TO LEIGH HUNT

LIVORNO,

Monday, Sept[ember] 27, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We are now on the point of leaving this place for Florence, where we have taken pleasant apartments for six months, which brings us to the 1st of April, the season at which new flowers and new thoughts spring forth upon the earth and in the mind. What is then our destination is yet undecided. I have not seen Florence, except as one sees the outside of the streets; but its *physiognomy* indicates it to be a city which, though the ghost of a republic, yet possesses most amiable qualities. I wish you could meet us there in the spring, and we would try to muster up a "lieta brigata," which, leaving behind them the pestilence of remembered misfortunes, might act over

again the pleasures of the Interlocutors in Boccaccio. I have been lately reading this most divine writer. He is, in a high sense of the word, a poet, and his language has the rhythm and harmony of verse. I think him not equal certainly to Dante or Petrarch, but far superior to Tasso and Ariosto, the children of a later and of a colder day. I consider the three first as the productions of the vigour of the infancy of a new nation—as rivulets from the same spring as that which fed the greatness of the republics of Florence and Pisa, and which checked the influence of the German emperors; and from which, through obscurer channels, Raffael and Michael Angelo drew the light and the harmony of their inspiration. When the second-rate poets of Italy wrote, the corrupting blight of tyranny was already hanging on every bud of genius. Energy, and simplicity, and unity of idea, were no more. In vain do we seek in the finest passages of Ariosto and Tasso, any expression which at all approaches in this respect to those of Petrarch and Dante. How much do I admire Boccaccio! What descriptions of nature are those in his little introductions to every new day! It is the morning of life stripped of that mist of familiarity which makes it obscure to us. Boccaccio seems to me to have possessed a deep sense of the fair ideal of human life, considered in its social relations. His more serious theories of love agree especially with mine. He often expresses things lightly too, which have serious meanings of a very beautiful kind. He is a moral casuist, the opposite of the Christian, stoical, ready-made, and worldly system of morals. Do you remember one little remark, or rather maxim of his, the application of which might do some good to the common narrow-minded conceptions of love,—“*Bocca bacciata non perde ventura; anzi rinnuova, come fa la luna?*” If you show this to Marianne give my love to her and tell her that I don't mean xxxxx . . . . . ———

We expect Mary to be confined towards the end of October, and one of our motives in going to Florence is to

have the attendance of Mr. Bell, a famous Scotch surgeon, who will be there. . . . I should feel some disquietude in entrusting her to the best of the Italian practitioners. The birth of a child will probably relieve her from some part of her present melancholy depression.

It would give me much pleasure to know Mr. Lloyd. Do you know, when I was in Cumberland, I got Southey to borrow a copy of Berkeley from him, and I remember observing some pencil notes in it, probably written by Lloyd, which I thought particularly acute. One, especially, struck me as being the assertion of a doctrine, of which even then I had long been persuaded, and on which I had founded much of my persuasions, regarding the imagined cause of the Universe—"Mind cannot create, it can only perceive." Ask him if he remembers having written it.<sup>1</sup> Of Lamb you know my opinion, and you can bear witness to the regret which I felt, when I learned that the calumny of an enemy had deprived me of his society whilst in England.—Ollier tells me that the *Quarterly* are going to review me; I suppose it will be a pretty morsel, and as I am acquiring a taste for humour and drollery, I confess I am curious to see it. I have sent my "Prometheus Unbound" to Peacock—if you ask him for it he will show it you—I think it will please you.

Whilst I went to Florence, Mary wrote to you, but I did not see her letter.—I omitted in the transcription of my poem<sup>2</sup> which you will have received, the following verse which comes after the line. Well, good bye. Next Monday I shall write to you from Florence. Love to all.

Most affectionately your friend, P. B. S.

You will probably soon see Mr. Gisborne. I think I told you about him before. [By Mary Shelley]. Direct your letters ferma in Posta Firenze.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 345. <sup>2</sup> Mr. Buxton Forman, who printed some unpublished extracts from this letter in *The Athenæum*, April 10, 1909, and to whom I am indebted for their use, assumes that the poem here referred to is "The Masque of Anarchy."

## XVI. FLORENCE

October 13, 1819—January 25, 1820

SHELLEY'S Steamboat Project—The *Quarterly Review*—"Prometheus Unbound"—Shelley and Reveley—Leigh Hunt's Defence of Shelley—"Peter Bell the Third"—Shelley's Letter on Richard Carlile—The National Debt—Birth of Percy Florence Shelley—Greek Literature—Spanish Studies—"The Masque of Anarchy"—The *Blackwood* Article—English Politics.

### 333. TO MARIA GISBORNE

FLORENCE,<sup>1</sup>

October 13 or 14, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The regret we feel at our absence from you persuades me that it is a state which cannot last, and which, so long as it must last, will be interrupted by some intervals, one of which is destined to be your all coming to visit us here! Poor Oscar! I feel a kind of remorse to think of the unequal love with which two animated beings regard each other, when I experience no such sensations for him, as those which he manifested for us. His importunate regret is, however, a type of ours, as regards you. Our memory

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<sup>1</sup> Prof. Dowden says that Shelley went to Florence with Charles Clairmont, about September 20, to look for lodgings. He returned on the 29th and on the following day left the Villa Valsovano with Mary and Clare, and arrived at Florence on October 2, where they put up at the boarding house of Madame Merveilleux du Plantis, in the Via Val Fonda. While at Florence Mrs. Shelley tells us that "Shelley passed several days in the Gallery, and made various notes on its ancient works of art." These notes, with others made at Rome, were first published in their complete form by Mr. H. Buxton Forman as a separate volume in 1879; he afterwards included them in his edition of Shelley's Prose Works, 1880, Vol. III, p. 43 *et seqq.* Eight of them had been printed previously with his usual inaccuracy by Medwin in his "Shelley Papers," 1833, and these Mrs. Shelley reprinted in Shelley's "Essays and Letters," 1840.



—if you will accept so humble a metaphor—is for ever scratching at the door of your absence.

About Henry and the steam-engine.<sup>1</sup> I am in torture until this money comes from London, though I am sure that it will and must come; unless, indeed, my banker has broke, and then it will be my loss, not Henry's—a little delay will mend the matter. I would then write instantly

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Shelley says that "Shelley set on foot the building of a steamboat, to ply between Marsilles, Genoa, and Leghorn. Such an enterprise promised fortune to his friend who undertook to build it, and the anticipation filled him with delight. Unfortunately an unforeseen complication of circumstances caused the design to be abandoned, when already far advanced towards completion"—Mary Shelley printed the following from Mrs. Gisborne in explanation of a portion of Shelley's letter—

"MY DEAREST MRS. SHELLEY,

"I began to feel a little uneasy at not hearing from you by Wednesday's post; you may judge, therefore, with how much pleasure I received your friendly lines, informing me of your safe arrival, and good state of health, and that of Mr. Shelley. A little agitation of the nerves is a trifling evil, and was to be expected after such a tremendous journey for you at such a time; yet you could not refrain from two little innocent quizzes, notwithstanding your hand trembling. I confess I dreaded the consequences when I saw the carriage drive off on the rough road. Did you observe that foolish dog Oscar, running by your side, waving his long slender tail? Giuseppe was obliged to catch him up in his arms to stop his course; he continued for several days at dinner-time to howl piteously, and to scratch with all his might at the door of your abandoned house. What a forlorn house! I cannot bear to look at it. My last letter from Mr. Gisborne is dated the 4th; he has been seriously indisposed ever since his first attack; he suffers now a return of his cough, which he can only mitigate by taking quantities of opium. I do not expect to see him till the end of the week. You say that he was not the person to undertake a land journey to England by abominable French diligences. (What says C. to the words *abominable* and *French*?) I think he might have suffered less in a foot journey, pursued leisurely *e a suo comodo*. All's well that ends well! Mr. G. gave a shocking account of Marseilles; he seems to think Tuscany a delightful country compared to what he has seen of France. I remarked, in one of your letters, the account you give of your travelling with a French voiturier, so unlike the obligingness we have always experienced from our Italian vetturini; we have found them ever ready to sacrifice themselves and their horses, sooner than do an uncivil thing, and distressed beyond measure at our determination of going sometimes for miles on foot, though, at the same time, their beasts might scarcely have been

to London an effectual letter, and by return of post all would be set right—it would then be a thing easily set straight—but if it were not, you know me too well not to know that there is no personal suffering, or degradation, or toil, or anything that can be named, with which I do not feel myself bound to support this enterprise of Henry. But all this rhodomontade only shows how correct Mr. Bielby's advice was, about the discipline necessary for my imagination. No doubt that all will go on with mercantile and commonplace exactness, and that you will be spared the suffering, and I the virtue, incident to some untoward event.

I am anxious to hear of Mr. Gisborne's return, and I anticipate the surprise and pleasure with which he will learn that a resolution has been taken which leaves you nothing to regret in that event. It is with unspeakable satisfaction that I reflect that my entreaties and persuasions overcame your scruples on this point, and that

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able to drag the vehicle without us. This is in favour of the Italians; God knows there is enough to be said against them.

"Now, I will tell you the news of the steamboat. The contract was drawn and signed the day after your departure; the vessel to be complete, and launched, fit in every respect for the sea, excepting the finishing of the cabin, for 260 sequins. We have every reason to believe that the work will be well executed, and that it is an excellent bargain. Henry and Frankfort go on not only with vigour, but with fury; the lower part of the house is filled with models prepared for casting, forging, etc. We have procured the wood for the frame from the ship-builder on credit, so that Frankfort can go on with his work; but I am sorry to say that from this time the general progress of the work will be retarded for want of cash. The boilers might now be going on contemporaneously with the casting, but I know that at present there is no remedy for this evil. Every person concerned is making exertions, and is in a state of anxiety to see the quick result of this undertaking. I have advanced about 140 crowns, but prudence prohibits me from going any farther.

"Henry will write to Mr. Shelley when the works are in a greater state of forwardness: in the meantime, he sends his best love to his good friends, patron and patroness, and begs his kind remembrance to Miss Clairmont.

"I remain, with sincere affection for you all,

"Ever yours,

"M. G."

whatever advantage shall accrue from it will belong to you, whilst any reproach due to the imprudence of such an enterprise must rest on me. I shall thus share the pleasure of success, and bear the blame and loss (if such a thing were possible), of a reverse; and what more can a man, who is a friend to another, desire for himself? Let us believe in a kind of optimism, in which we are our own gods. It is best that Mr. Gisborne should have returned; it is best that I should have over-persuaded you and Henry; it is best that you should all live together, without any more solitary attempts; it is best that this one attempt should have been made, otherwise, perhaps, one thing which is best might not have occurred; and it is best that we should think all this for the best; even though it is not; because Hope, as Coleridge says, is a solemn duty, which we owe alike to ourselves and to the world—a worship to the spirit of good within, which requires, before it sends that inspiration forth, which impresses its likeness upon all that it creates, devoted and disinterested homage.

A different scene is this from that in which you made the chief character of our changing drama. We see no one, as usual. Madame M——<sup>1</sup> is quiet, and we only meet her now and then, by chance. Her daughter, not so fair, but I fear as cold, as the snowy Florimel in Spenser, is in and out of love with Charles [Clairmont] as the winds happen to blow; and Charles, who, at the moment I happen to write, is in a high state of transitory contentment, is setting off to Vienna in a day or two.

My £100, from what mistake remains to be explained, has not yet arrived, and the banker here is going to advance me £50, on my bill at three months—all additional facilitation, should any such be needed, for the steamboat. I have yet seen little of Florence. The gallery I have a design of studying piecemeal; one of my chief objects

<sup>1</sup> Is this the Madame Merveilleux mentioned in the above footnote?

in Italy being the observing in statuary and painting the degree in which, and the rules according to which, that ideal beauty, of which we have so intense yet so obscure an apprehension, is realised in external forms.

Adieu.—I am anxious for Henry's first letter. Give to him and take to yourself those sentiments, whatever they may be, with which you know that I cannot cease to regard you.

Most faithfully and affectionately yours,  
P. B. S.

I had forgotten to say that I should be very much obliged to you, if you would contrive to send "The Cenci," which are at the printer's, to England, by the next ship. I forgot it in the hurry of departure.—I have just heard from P[eacock], saying, that he don't think that my tragedy will do, and that he don't much like it. But I ought to say, to blunt the edge of his criticism, that he is a nursling of the exact and superficial school in poetry.

If Mr. G. is returned, send the "Prometheus" with them.

334. TO CHARLES AND JAMES OLLIER  
(London)

FLORENCE,

Oct. 15, 1819.

DEAR SIR,

The droll remarks of the *Quarterly*, and Hunt's kind defence, arrived as safe as such poison, and safer than such an antidote, usually do.

I am on the point of sending to you 250 copies of a work which I have printed in Italy; which you will have to pay four or five pounds duty upon, on my account. Hunt will tell you the *kind of thing* it is, and in the course of the winter I shall send directions for its publication, *until the arrival of which directions, I request that you would have the kindness not to open the box, or, if by necessity it is*

opened, to abstain from observing yourself, or permitting others to observe, what it contains.<sup>1</sup> I trust this confidently to you, it being of consequence. Meanwhile, assure yourself that this work has no reference, direct or indirect, to politics, or religion, or personal satire, and that this precaution is merely literary.

The "Prometheus," a poem in my best style, whatever that may amount to, will arrive with it, but in MS., which you can print and publish in the season. It is the most perfect of my productions.

Southey wrote the article in question, I am well aware.<sup>2</sup> Observe the impudence of the man in speaking of himself. The only remark worth notice in this piece is the assertion that I imitate Wordsworth. It may as well be said that Lord Byron imitates Wordsworth, or that Wordsworth imitates Lord Byron, both being great poets, and deriving from the new springs of thought and feeling, which the great events of our age have exposed to view, a similar tone of sentiment, imagery, and expression. A certain

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<sup>1</sup> The work referred to here was "The Cenci." Lady Shelley says that the italics are Shelley's own.

<sup>2</sup> The *Quarterly Review* for April, 1819, in reviewing "The Revolt of Islam," made an attack on Shelley's character and private life. The following is the passage in the review to which Shelley alludes: "In the enthusiasm of youth, indeed, a man like Mr. Shelley may cheat himself with the imagined loftiness and independence of his theory, and it is easy to invent a thousand sophisms to reconcile his conscience to the impurity of his practice: but this lasts only long enough to lead him on beyond the power of return; he ceases to be the dupe, but with desperate malignity he becomes the deceiver of others. Like the Egyptians of old, the wheels of his chariot are broken, the path of 'mighty waters' close in upon him behind, and a still deepening ocean is before him:—for a short time are seen his impotent struggles against a resistless power, his blasphemous execrations are heard, his despair but poorly assumes the tone of triumph and defiance, and he calls ineffectually on others to follow him to the same ruin—finally he sinks 'like lead' to the bottom and is forgotten. So it is now in part, so shortly will it be entirely with Mr. Shelley." At first he believed Southey to have been the author of the article, but afterwards credited it to Milman; it is now known that the reviewer was Sir John Taylor Coleridge (1790-1876), who had been a schoolfellow of Shelley's at Eton.

similarity all the best writers of any particular age inevitably are marked with, from the spirit of that age acting on all. This I had explained in my preface, which the writer was too disingenuous to advert to. As to the other trash, and particularly that lame attack on my personal character, which was meant so ill, and which I am not the man to feel, 'tis all nothing. I am glad, with respect to that part of it which alludes to Hunt, that it should so have happened that I dedicate, as you will see, a work which has all the capacities for being popular to that excellent person. I was amused, too, with the finale; it is like the end of the first act of an opera, when that tremendous concordant discord sets up from the orchestra, and everybody talks and sings at once. It describes the result of my battle with their Omnipotent God; his pulling me under the sea by the hair of my head, like Pharaoh; my calling out like the devil who was *game* to the last; swearing and cursing in all comic and horrid oaths, like a French postillion on Mount Cenis; entreating everybody to drown themselves; pretending not to be drowned myself when I *am* drowned; and, lastly, *being* drowned.<sup>1</sup> You would do me a particular kindness if you would call on Hunt, and ask him when my parcel went, the name of the ship, and the name of the captain, and whether he has any bill of lading, which, if he has, you would oblige me by sending, together with the rest of the information, by return of post, addressed to the Post Office, Florence.

Yours very sincerely,

P. B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed outside],  
Messrs. OLLIER & Co.,  
Booksellers,  
Vere Street, Broad Street,  
London, Angleterre.  
[English postmark], Oct. 30, 1819.

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<sup>1</sup> "Shelley's frequent allusions to his being drowned are very singular,"—Lady Shelley's note.

335. TO MR. DORVILLE<sup>1</sup>

FLORENCE,

October 18, 1819.

SIR,

Hearing from Mr Hoppner that you were kind enough to interest yourself in the fate of little Allegra, I took the liberty to ask the favour from you of informing me where she is at present; and where Lord Byron is, or where he is next expected to be; and of communicating to me any intelligence which you may think interesting as regards her. You will have probably been informed of the manner in which I am circumstanced relatively to the subject of this letter.

Yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

336. TO THE EDITOR OF THE "QUARTERLY REVIEW."<sup>2</sup>

1819.

SIR,

I observe in the Sept. No. of the *Review*, which . . . . . the author of that article, after depreciating the merits of a poem written by me, asserts that what "he now knows to the disadvantage of my personal character affords an unanswerable comment on the text either of his review or my poem." I hereby call upon the author of that article, or you as the responsible agent, publicly to produce your proofs, or, as you have thrust yourself forward to deserve the character of a slanderer, to acquiesce also in. . . . .

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<sup>1</sup> Dorville was Vice-Consul at Venice. Byron, in a letter to R. B. Hoppner, Oct. 29, 1819, says: "If you go to Milan, pray leave a Vice-Consul at Venice—the only *vice* that will ever be wanting in Venice. Dorville is a good fellow."—Prothero's "Byron," IV, 372.

<sup>2</sup> This fragment of a draft of a letter, probably never sent, is printed in Dr. Richard Garnett's "Relics of Shelley," p. 83.

## 337. TO MARIA GISBORNE

FLORENCE,

Oct. 21, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I send you a cheque for 111 sequins, 5 pauls, the produce of fifty pounds, to go on with. It must be presented and indorsed by Henry, to get the money. The £200 will arrive in a few days.

My sincerest congratulations to Mr. Gisborne on his arrival.

I write these lines in a stationer's close to the Post Office in great haste, not to miss the post.

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

## 338. TO HENRY REVELEY

FLORENCE,

Oct[ober] 28, 1819.

MY DEAR HENRY,

So it seems *I* am to begin the correspondence, though I have more to ask than to tell.

You know our bargain; you are to write me *uncorrected* letters, just as the words come, so let me have them—I like coin from the mint—though it may be a little rough at the edges;—clipping is penal according to our statute.<sup>1</sup>

In the first place, listen to a reproach; you ought to have sent me an acknowledgment of my last billet. I am

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<sup>1</sup> "Henry Reveley's education had been chiefly scientific, and although sufficiently skilled in the Italian language, he expressed himself imperfectly and with difficulty when he attempted to write an English letter. He afterwards said, 'Whenever a letter had to be sent from me, which seldom happened, more than once it was written out by Mr. Gisborne, and was copied out by me as best I could.' Shelley believed that a mastery of the English tongue was essential to Henry's success in life, and he undertook in an informal way to be tutor by correspondence of this backward scholar."—Dowden, II, pp. 306-7.



very happy to hear from Mr. Gisborne, and he knows well enough how to interest me himself, not to need to rob me of an occasion of hearing from you. Let you and I try if we cannot be as punctual and business-like as the best of them. But no clipping and coining, if you please.

Now take this that I say in a light just so serious as not to give you pain. In fact, my dear fellow, my motive for soliciting your correspondence, and that flowing from your own mind, and clothed in your own words, is, that you may begin to accustom to discipline yourself in the only practice of life in which you appear deficient. You know that you are writing to a person persuaded of all the confidence and respect due to your powers in those branches of science to which you have addicted yourself ; and you will not permit a false shame with regard to the mere mechanical arrangement of words to overbalance the advantage arising from the free communication of ideas. Thus you will become day by day more skilful in the management of that instrument of their communication, on which the attainment of a person's just rank in society depends. Do not think me arrogant. There are subjects of the highest importance in which you are far better qualified to instruct me, than I am qualified to instruct you on this subject.

Well, how goes on all ? The boilers, the keel of the boat, and the cylinder and all the other elements of that soul which is to guide our "monstruo de fuego y agua" over the sea ? Let me hear news of their birth, and how they thrive after they are born. And is the money arrived at Mr. Webb's ? Send me an account of the number of crowns you realise ; as I think we had better, since it is a transaction in this country, keep our accounts in money of this country.

We have rains enough to set the mills going, which are essential to your great iron bar. I suppose it is at present either made or making.

My health is better so long as the scirocco blows, and,

but for my daily expectation of Mary's confinement, I should have been half tempted to have come to see you. As it is, I shall wait till the boat is finished. On the subject of your actual and your expected progress, you will certainly allow me to hear from you.

Give my kindest regards to your Mother and Mr. Gisborne—tell the latter, whose billet I have neglected to answer, that I did so under the idea of addressing him in a post or two on a subject which gives me considerable anxiety about you all. I mean the continuance of your property in the British funds at this crisis of approaching revolution. It is the business of a friend to say what he thinks without fear of giving offence ; and, if I were not a friend, argument is worth its market-price anywhere.

Believe me, my dear Henry,

Your very faithful friend,

P. B. S.

### 339. To JOHN AND MARIA GISBORNE

FLORENCE,

Oct. 28, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I receive this morning the strange and unexpected news that my bill of £200 has been returned to Mr. Webb protested. Ultimately this can be nothing but delay, as I have only drawn from my banker's hands so much as to leave them still in possession of £80, and this I positively know, and can prove by documents. By return of post, for I have not only written to my banker, but to private friends, no doubt Henry will be enabled to proceed. Let him meanwhile do all that can be done.

Meanwhile, to save time, could not money be obtained temporarily, at Livorno, from Mr. W[ebb ?], or Mr. G——, or any of your acquaintance, on my bills at three or six months, indorsed by Mr. Gisborne and Henry, so that he

may go on with his work ? If a month is of consequence, think of this.

Be of good cheer, Madonna mia, all will go well. The inclosed is for Henry, and was written before this news, as he will see ; but it does not, strange as it is, abate one atom of my cheer.

Accept, dear Mr. G., my best regards.

Yours faithfully,

P. B. S.

### 340. TO LEIGH HUNT

FLORENCE,

Nov[ember] 2, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You cannot but know how sensibly I feel your kind expressions concerning me in the third part of your observations on the *Quarterly* :<sup>1</sup> I feel that it is from a friend. As to the perverse-hearted writer of these calumnies, I

<sup>1</sup> The "kind expressions concerning me in the third part of your observations on the *Quarterly*," were these—

"To return to Mr. Shelley. The reviewer asserts that he 'is shamefully dissolute in his conduct.' We heard of similar assertions when we resided in the same house with Mr. Shelley for nearly three months : and how was he living all that time ? As much like Plato himself, as all his theories resemble Plato—or rather still more like a Pythagorean. This was the round of his daily life—he was up early : breakfasted sparingly : wrote this "Revolt of Islam" all the morning : went out in his boat, or into the woods with some Greek author or the Bible in his hands : came home to a dinner of vegetables (for he took neither meat nor wine) : visited, if necessary, the sick and fatherless, whom others gave Bibles to and no help : wrote or studied again, or read to his wife and friends the whole evening : took a crust of bread, or a glass of whey for his supper : and went early to bed. This is literally the whole of the life he led, or what we believe he now leads in Italy : nor have we ever known him in spite of the malignant and ludicrous exaggerations on this point, deviate, notwithstanding his theories, even into a single action which those who differ with him might think blameable. We do not say that he would always square his conduct by their opinions as a matter of principle : we only say that he acted just as if he could so square it. We forbear, out of regard for the very bloom of their beauty, to touch upon numberless other charities and

feel assured that it is Southey, and the only notice which it becomes me to take of it, is to seek an occasion of personal expostulation with him on my return to England—not on the ground, however, of what he has written in the *Review*, but on another ground. As to anonymous criticism, it is a much fitter subject for merriment than serious comment; except, indeed, when the latter can be made a vehicle, as you have done, of the kindest friendship.

Now, I only send you a *very heroic* poem<sup>1</sup>, which I wish you to give to Ollier, and desire him to print and publish immediately, you being kind enough to take upon yourself the corrections of the press—not, however, with my name, and you must tell Ollier that the author is to be kept a secret, and that I confide in him for this object as I would confide in a physician or lawyer, or any other man whose professional situation renders the betraying of what is entrusted a dishonour. My motive in this is solely not to prejudice myself in the present moment, as I have only expended a few days in this party squib, and, of course, taken little pains. The verses and language I have let come as they would, and I am about to publish more serious things this winter; afterwards, that is next year, if the thing should be remembered so long, I have no

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generosities which we have known him to exercise, but this we must say in general, that we never lived with a man who gave so complete an idea of an ardent and principled aspirant in philosophy as Percy Shelley, and that we believe him from the bottom of our hearts to be one of the noblest hearts as well as heads which the world has seen for a long time. We never met, in short, with a being who came nearer, perhaps so near, to that height of humanity mentioned in the conclusion of an essay of Lord Bacon's, where he speaks of excess of charity and of its not being in the power of "man or angel to come in danger by it."—*Examiner*, Oct. 10, 1819.

<sup>1</sup> The poem that Shelley refers to here is his "Peter Bell the Third," which remained unpublished until 1840, when Mary Shelley included it in the demy 8vo edition of her husband's poems of that date. Wordsworth's "Peter Bell," written some twenty years earlier, was published in 1819, and excited the ridicule of Leigh Hunt and others of his school. Shelley, who regarded Wordsworth as disloyal to his ideals of justice and truth, satirized him on that account, although he was an ardent admirer of his poetry.

objection to the author being known, but *not now*. I should like well enough that it should both go to press and be printed very quickly; as more serious things are on the eve of engaging both the public attention and mine.

Next post day you will hear from me again, as I have many things to say, and expect to have to announce Mary's *new work*, now in the press. She has written out, as you will observe, *my* "Peter," and this is, I suspect, the last thing she will do before the new birth.

Affectionately yours,

My dear friend,

P. B. S.

### 311. TO LEIGH HUNT

FLORENCE,

November 3, 1819.

[Wednesday.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The event of Carlile's<sup>1</sup> trial has filled me with an indignation that will not, and ought not to be suppressed.

In the name of all we hope for in human nature what are the people of England about? or rather how long will they and those whose hereditary duty it is to lead them endure the enormous outrages of which they are one day made the victim, and the next the instrument? Post succeeds post and fresh horrors are ever detailed. First we hear that a troop of the enraged master-manufacturers are let loose with sharpened swords upon their starving dependents; and in spite of the remonstrances of the regular

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Carlile (1790-1843), a publisher of free-thought books, was tried in October, 1819, for a blasphemous libel in "Paine's Age of Reason," and Palmer's "Principles of Nature," and was sentenced in a fine of £1,500, and three years' imprisonment in Dorchester jail. When Shelley heard of the conviction (but not the sentence), he addressed the above letter of five sheets to Leigh Hunt, who does not appear to have printed it. Mr. H. Buxton Forman was the first to publish it in his Library edition of Shelley's Prose Works, from the original letter in the collection of Sir Percy Shelley.

troops that they ride over them and massacre without distinction of sex or age, and cut off women's breasts and dash the heads of infants against the stones. Then comes information that a man has been found guilty of some inexplicable crime, which his prosecutors call blasphemy, one of the features of which, they inform us, is the denying that the massacring of children was done by the immediate command of the author and preserver of all things.

And thus at the same time, we see on one hand men professing to act by the public authority who put in practice the trampling down and murdering an unarmed multitude without distinction of sex or age, and on the other, a tribunal which punishes men for asserting that deeds of the same character, transacted in a distant age and country, were not done by the command of God. If not for this, for what was Mr. Carlile prosecuted? For impugning the Divinity of Jesus Christ? I impugn it.—For denying that the whole mass of ancient Hebrew literature is of divine authority? I deny it.—I hope this is no blasphemy, and that I am not to be dragged home by the enmity of our political adversaries to be made a sacrifice to the superstitious fury of the ruling sect. But I am prepared both to do my duty and abide by whatever consequences may be attached to its fulfilment.

It is said that Mr. Carlile has been found guilty by a jury. Juries are frequently in cases of libel illegally and partially constituted, and whenever this can be proved the party accused has a title to a new trial. A view of the question, so simple that it is in danger of being overlooked from its very obviousness has presented itself to me, by which, I think, it will clearly appear that this [il]legal and partial character belonged to the jury which pronounced a verdict of guilty against Mr. Carlile, and that he is entitled to a new trial.

It is the privilege of an Englishman to be tried, not only by a jury, but by a jury of his peers. Who are the peers

of any man, and what is the legal import of this word ? Let us illustrate the letter by the spirit of the law.

A nobleman has a right to be tried by his peers—a gentleman, a tradesman, a farmer—the like—. The peers of a man are men of the same station, class denomination with himself. The reason on which this provision is founded is that the persons called upon to determine the guilt or innocence of the accused might be so alive to a tender sympathy towards him, through common interest, habits and opinions, as to render it improbable, either that thro' neglect or aversion they would commit injustice towards him, or that they might be incapable of knowing and weighing the merits of the case. Butchers and surgeons are excluded on this ground from juries ; it being supposed by the law that they are engaged in occupations foreign to that delicate sensibility respecting human life and suffering exacted in those selected as arbiters for inflicting it. From the dictation of this spirit, in all cases where foreigners are criminally accused, the jury impanelled are half Englishmen and half foreigners, and the reason why they are not all foreigners is manifest—not that it is theoretically just that any men not strictly his peers should determine between the accuser and the country, but because the practical disadvantage arising from the inexperience of foreigners in this admirable form peculiar to English law, would overbalance the advantage of adhering to the shadow, by letting the substance of justice escape. This, therefore, is the law and the spirit of the law, of juries, and thus plainly and clearly is it illustrated by the ancient and perpetual practice of the English courts of justice.

Who were Mr. Carlile's peers ? Mr. Carlile was a Deist, accused of blaspheming the religion of men professing themselves Christians. Who are his peers ? Christians ? Surely not. Such a proposition is refuted by the very terms of which it is composed. It were to constitute a jury out of the men who are parties to the prosecution ;

it were to make those who are offended, judges of the cause of him, by whom they profess themselves to have been offended ; it were less absurd to impanel the nearest relations of a murdered man to try the guilt or innocence of a person on whom circumstances attach a strong suspicion of the deed. No honest Christian would sit on such a jury except he felt himself thoroughly imbued with the universal toleration preached by the alleged founder of his religion—a state of feeling which we are not warranted by experience to presume to belong except to extraordinary men. He must know he could not be impartial. He sees before him the enemy of his God, one already predestined to the tortures of Hell, and who by the most specious arguments is seducing everyone around him into the same peril. He probably feels that his own faith is tottering, whilst he listens to the prisoner's defence, and that naturally redoubles his indignation.—How is such a person to be considered as the *peer* of the other, if by peer be meant, one who from common habits and interests would be likely to weigh the merits of the cause dispassionately ? He is a person of the same sect with him who framed the indictment on which the culprit is accused as a malicious blasphemer, He is evidently less his *peer* with reference to the circumstance of the case than a ploughman would be the peer of a nobleman ; and it is less probable that the one would give an unconscientious verdict from envy towards rank than the other from abhorrence for the speculative opinions of the prisoner.

The Christian may be the peer of the Deist, with reference to any matter not involving a question of his guilt in expressing contumelious sentiments concerning the Christian's own belief (for this, if anything, is meant by blasphemy), because he may have those common interests and feelings which make one man alive to render justice to another ; but with regard to the matter in question he cannot be his peer, because he is one of the persons whom he is charged as having injured, because what he boasts to



consider as his most important interests compel him to judge harshly of the accused and impersonate the [accuser ?] A Quaker's testimony is not indeed admitted in criminal cases, and this disqualification bears with it a sort of appearance of reason. He protests as it were against the jurisdiction of the court, by refusing to comply with the formality in which it has been the established practice of every British citizen to acquiesce. Besides, he not only refuses, but refusing, acknowledges the divine authority of that code on which he is nevertheless unwilling to pledge the truth of his statement. This might be interpreted into the leaving himself a loop-hole thro' which to escape. The pretence might be assumed by those who wish to do evil by a false assertion, and yet to escape what they might fear from the vengeance of their God on invoking him as the witness of a deliberate untruth. At least, all this is plausible. But the truth is that Jesus Christ forbade in the most express terms the attaching to any one asseveration rather than to any other, a sanction to insure its credibility.—This the Quaker knows. The grounds on which the Quaker's testimony is rejected might be shown to be futile, at present it seems sufficient to have proved that the same arguments which have been used to exclude the Quaker from his rights (for all civil powers are rights) as a witness and juryman do not apply to the Deist.

On these grounds, I think Mr. Carlile is entitled to make application for a new trial, and I am at a loss to conceive how the judges of the King's Bench can refuse to comply with his demands, unless a few modern precedents, founded on an oversight now corrected, are to overturn the very foundations of the law of which they have been perversions. One point of consideration which was pleaded by Mr. Carlile on his defence, cannot be too distinctly understood. The same justice ought to be dispensed to all. Of two murderers, one ought not to be hung, whilst the other having committed the same crime with the same evidence notoriously existing against him, is allowed to walk about at

liberty,—of two perjurers, one ought not to be pilloried and the other sent on embassies. Nor are they for these real and not conventional crimes. But is Mr. Carlile the only Deist? and Mr. Paine the only deistical writer that these heavy penalties are called down on the person of the one, and these furious execrations darted from an indictment upon the works of the other? What! Was Hume not a Deist? Has not Gibbon, without whose work no library is complete, assailed Christianity with most subtle reasoning, turned it into a by-word and a joke? Has not Sir William Drummond, the most acute metaphysical critic of the age, a man of profound learning, high employment in the State, and unblemished integrity of character, controverted Christianity in a manner no less undisguised and bold than Mr. Paine? If Mr. Godwin in his *Political Justice* and his *Enquirer* has abstained from entering into a detailed argument against it, has he not treated it as an exploded superstition to which, in the present state of knowledge, it was unworthy of his high character as a moral philosopher, to advert? Has not Mr. Burdon, a gentleman of great fortune, published a book called "Materials for Thinking" in which he plainly avows his disbelief in the divine authority of the Bible? Is not Mr. Bentham a Deist? What men of any rank in society from their talents are not Deists whose understandings have been unbiassed by any allurements of worldly interest? Which of our great literary characters not receiving emoluments from the advocating a system of religion inseparably connected with the source of that emolument is not a Deist? Even some of those very men who are the loudest to condemn and malign others for rejecting Christianity, I know to be Deists. But that I disdain to violate the sanctity of private intercourse for good, as others have done for evil, I would state names.—Those already cited, who have publicly professed themselves Deists, are the names of persons of splendid genius, wealth and rank, and exercising a great influence thro' their example and their reasoning

faculties upon the conduct and opinions of their contemporaries. But who is Mr. Carlile? A bookseller, I imagine, of small means, who, with the innocent design of maintaining his wife and children, took advantage of the repeal of the Acts against impugning the Divinity of Jesus Christ to publish some books the main object of which was to impugn that notion and destroy the authorities on which it is founded. The chief of these works is the "Age of Reason," a production of the celebrated Paine, which the prosecutors were so far unfortunate in selecting, whatever may be its defects as a piece of argument, inasmuch as it was written by that great and good man under circumstances in which only great and good men are ever found; at the bottom of a dungeon, under momentary expectation of death for having opposed a tyrant. It has the solemn sincerity, and that is something in an age of hypocrites, of a voice from the bed of death.

Why not brand other works which are more learned and systematically complete than this work of Paine's; why not brand works which have been written not in a solitary dungeon, with no access to any book of reference, but in convenient and well-selected libraries, by a judicial process? Why not indict Mr. Bentham<sup>1</sup> or Sir William Drummond?<sup>2</sup> Why crush a starving bookseller, and anathematize a work, which though perhaps perfect enough for its purpose must from the very circumstances of its composition be imperfect? Surely, if the tyrants could find any individual of

<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), a voluminous writer on jurisprudence and ethics, and "one of the ablest champions of utilitarianism." His "Rationale of Punishments and Rewards," written in 1775, first saw light in a French translation by Dumont in 1811, and was read by Shelley while at Bracknell. (See p. 420.)

<sup>2</sup> Sir William Drummond (1770?-1828), scholar and diplomatist, sometime M.P. for St. Mawes and Lostwithiel, Minister at Naples, and Ambassador at the Porte. In his "Oedipus Judaicus," printed for private circulation, he attempted to explain the histories and other parts of the Old Testament as astronomical allegories. Shelley quoted from his "Academical Questions" in the notes to "Queen Mab."

the higher classes of talent and rank, devoted to the cause of liberty against whom from any peculiar combination of accidents they could excite the superstitions of the people, no doubt they would trample upon him to their heart's content, especially if circumstances permitted them to trample and to outrage in secret. Tyrants, after all, are only a kind of demagogues. They must flatter the Great Beast. But in the case of attacking any of the aristocratical<sup>1</sup> Deists the risk of defeat would be great, and the chances of success small. And the prosecutors care little for religion, or care for it only as the mask and the garment by which they are invested with the symbols of worldly power. In prosecuting Carlyle, they have used the superstition of the jury as their instrument in crushing a political enemy, or rather they strike in his person at all their political enemies. They know that the Established Church is based upon the belief in certain events of a supernatural character having occurred in Judea eighteen centuries ago; that but for this belief the farmer would refuse to pay the tenth of the produce of his labours to maintain its members in idleness; that this class of persons if not maintained in idleness, would have something else to do than to divert the attention of the people from obtaining a Reform in their oppressive Government, and that consequently the Government would be reformed, and that the people would receive a just price for their labour, a consummation incompatible with the luxurious idleness in which their rulers esteem it their interest to live. —Economy, retrenchment, the disbanding of the standing army, the gradual abolition of the National Debt by some just yet speedy and effectual system, and such a reform in the representative system, and such a reform in the representation as by admitting the constitutional presence of the people in the State may prevent the recurrence of

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<sup>1</sup> "The word is not used in a bad sense; nor is the word Aristocracy susceptible of an ill signification. Oligarchy is the term for the tyrannical monopoly of the few."—Shelley's note.

evils which now present us with the alternative of despotism or revolution, are the objects at which the jury unceremoniously struck when from a sentiment of religious intolerance they delivered a verdict of guilty against Mr. Carlile.

## 342. TO JOHN AND MARIA GISBORNE

FLORENCE,

Nov[ember] 6, 1819

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I have just finished a letter of five sheets on Carlile's affair, and am in hourly expectation of Mary's confinement : you will imagine an excuse for my silence.

I forbear to address you, as I had designed, on the subject of your income as a public creditor of the English Government, as it seems you have not the exclusive management of your funds ; and the peculiar circumstances of the delusion are such that none but a very few persons will ever be brought to see its instability but by the experience of loss. If I were to convince you, Henry would probably be unable to convince his uncle. In vindication, however, of what I have already said, allow me to turn your attention to England at this *hour*.

In order to meet the national expenses, or rather that some approach towards meeting them might seem to be made, a tax of £3,000,000 was imposed. The first consequence of this has been a *defalcation* in the revenue at the rate of £3,600,000 a-year. Were the country in the most tranquil and prosperous state, the minister, in such a condition of affairs, must reduce the interest of the national debt, or add to it ; a process which would only insure the greater ultimate reduction of the interest. But the people are nearly in a state of insurrection, and the least unpopular noblemen perceive the necessity of conducting a spirit, which it is no longer possible to oppose. For submitting to this necessity—which, be assured, the haughty aristocrats

unwillingly did—Lord Fitzwilliam has been degraded from his situation of Lord-Lieutenant. An additional army of 11,500 men has received orders to be organised. Everything is preparing for a bloody struggle, in which, if the ministers succeed, they will assuredly diminish the interest of the national debt, for no combination of the heaviest tyranny can raise the taxes for its payment. If the people conquer, the public creditor will equally suffer; for it is monstrous to imagine that they will submit to the perpetual inheritance of a double aristocracy. They will perhaps find some crown and church lands, and appropriate the tithes to make a kind of compensation to the public creditor. They will confiscate the estates of their political enemies. But all this will not pay a tenth part of their debt. The existing Government, atrocious as it is, is the surest party to which a public creditor may attach himself. He may reason that *it may last my time*, though in the event the ruin is more complete than in the case of a popular revolution. I know you too well to believe you capable of arguing in this manner; I only reason on how things stand.

Your income may be reduced from £210 to £150, and then £100, and then, by the issue of immense quantities of paper to save the immediate cause of one of the conflicting parties, to any value however small; or the source of it may be cut off at once. The ministers had, I doubt not, long since determined to establish an arbitrary government; and if they had not determined so, they have now entangled themselves in that consequence of their instinct as rulers, and if they recede they must perish. They are, however, not receding, and we are on the eve of great actions.

Kindest regards to Henry. I hope he is not stopped for want of money, as I shall assuredly send him what he wants in a month from the date of my last letter. I received his letter from Pistoia, and have no other criticism to make on it, except the severest—that it is too short.

How goes on Portuguese—and Theocritus? I have deserted the odorous gardens of literature, to journey across the great sandy desert of politics;<sup>1</sup> not, as you may imagine, without the hope of finding some enchanted paradise. In all probability, I shall be overwhelmed by one of the tempestuous columns which are forever traversing, with the speed of a storm, and the confusion of a chaos, the pathless wilderness. You meanwhile will be lamenting in some happy oasis that I do not return. This is out-Calderonizing Muley. We have had lightning and rain here in plenty. I like the Cascine<sup>2</sup> very much, where I often walk alone, watching the leaves, and the rising and falling of the Arno. I am full of all kinds of literary plans.

Meanwhile, all yours most faithfully,  
P. B. S.

343. TO LEIGH HUNT

FIRENZE,

Nov[ember] 13, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Yesterday morning Mary brought me a little boy.<sup>3</sup> She suffered but two hours' pain, and is now so well that it seems a wonder that she stays in bed. The babe is also quite well, and has begun to suck. You may imagine that this is a great relief and a great comfort to me amongst all my misfortunes, past, present, and to come.

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley probably here refers to his "Philosophical View of Reform." For a description of this unpublished work see Professor Dowden's article in the *Fortnightly Review*, Nov. 1st, 1886.

<sup>2</sup> In his note to the "Ode to the West Wind" Shelley says "This poem was conceived and chiefly written [in 1819] in a wood [the Cascine] that skirts the Arno near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours that pour down the autumnal rains."

<sup>3</sup> Afterwards Sir Percy Florence Shelley. He succeeded his grandfather, Sir Timothy, in April, 1844, as third baronet, and died without issue on December 5, 1889.

Since I last wrote to you, some circumstances have occurred not necessary to explain by letter, which makes my pecuniary condition a very painful one. The physicians absolutely forbid my travelling to England in the winter, but I shall probably pay you a visit in the spring. With what pleasure, among all the other sources of regret and discomfort with which England abounds for me, do I think of looking on the original of that kind and earnest face, which is now opposite Mary's bed. It will be the only thing which Mary will envy me, or will need to envy me, in that journey, for I shall come alone. Shaking hands with you is worth all the trouble ; the rest is clear loss.

I will tell you more about myself and my pursuits in my next letter.

Kind love to Marianne, Bessy, and all the children. Poor Mary begins (for the first time) to look a little consoled ; for we have spent, as you may imagine, a miserable five months.

Good-bye, my dear Hunt.

Your affectionate friend,

I have had no letter from you *for a month*. P. B. S.  
To LEIGH HUNT, Esq.

### 344. TO JOHN GISBORNE

FLORENCE,

Nov[ember] 16, 1819.

MY DEAR SIR,

I envy you the first reading of "Theocritus." Were not the Greeks a glorious people ? What is there, as Job says of the Leviathan, like unto them ? If the army of Nicias had not been defeated under the walls of Syracuse ; if the Athenians had, acquiring Sicily, held the balance between Rome and Carthage, sent garrisons to the Greek colonies in the south of Italy, Rome might have been all that its intellectual condition entitled it to be, a tributary, not the conqueror of Greece ; the Macedonian power would never have attained to the dictatorship of the



civilised states of the world. Who knows whether, under the steady progress which philosophy and social institutions would have made (for, in the age to which I refer, their progress was both rapid and secure) among a people of the most perfect physical organization, whether the Christian religion would have arisen, or the barbarians have overwhelmed the wrecks of civilisation which had survived the conquest and tyranny of the Romans? What then should we have been? As it is, all of us who are worth anything, spend our manhood in unlearning the follies, or expiating the mistakes, of our youth. We are stuffed full of prejudices; and our natural passions are so managed, that if we restrain them we grow intolerant and precise, because we restrain them not according to reason, but according to error; and if we do not restrain them, we do all sorts of mischief to ourselves and others. Our imagination and understanding are alike subjected to rules the most absurd;—so much for Theocritus and the Greeks.

In spite of all your arguments, I wish your money were out of the funds. This middle course which you speak of, and which may probably have place, will amount to your losing not all your income, nor retaining all, but have the half taken away. I feel intimately persuaded, whatever political forms may have place in England, that no party can continue many years, perhaps not many months, in the administration, without diminishing the interest of the national debt.—And once having commenced—and having done so safely—where will it end?

Give Henry<sup>1</sup> my kindest thanks for his most interesting letter, and bid him expect one from me by the next post.

Mary and the babe continue well.—Last night we had a magnificent thunderstorm, with claps that shook the house like an earthquake. Both Mary and Clare unite with me in kindest remembrances to all.

Most faithfully yours obliged,

P. B. S.

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Reveley.

## 345. TO MARIA GISBORNE

FLORENCE,

Nov[ember] 16, 1819.

MADONNA,

I have been lately voyaging in a sea without my pilot, and although my sail has often been torn, my boat become leaky, and the log lost, I have yet sailed in a kind of way from island to island ; some of craggy and mountainous magnificence, some clothed with moss and flowers, and radiant with fountains, some barren deserts. *I have been reading Calderon without you.* I have read the "Cisma de Ingalaterra," the "Cabellos de Absolom," and three or four others. These pieces, inferior to those we read, at least to the "Principe Constante," in the splendour of particular passages, are perhaps superior in their satisfying completeness. The "Cabellos de Absolom" is full of the deepest and tenderest touches of nature. Nothing can be more pathetically conceived than the character of old David, and the tender and impartial love, overcoming all insults and all crimes, with which he regards his conflicting and disobedient sons. The incest scene of Amnon and Tamar is perfectly tremendous. Well may Calderon say in the person of the former :—

Si sangre sin fuego hiere,  
que fara sangre con fuego ?

Incest is, like many other incorrect things, a very poetical circumstance. It may be the excess of love or hate. It may be the defiance of everything for the sake of another, which clothes itself in the glory of the highest heroism ; or it may be that cynical rage which, confounding the good and the bad in existing opinions, breaks through them for the purpose of rioting in selfishness and antipathy. Calderon, following the Jewish historians, has represented Amnon's action in the basest point of view—he is a

prejudiced savage, acting what he abhors, and abhorring that which is the unwilling party to his crime.

Adieu. Madonna, yours truly,  
P. B. S.

I transcribe you a passage from the "Cisma de Inglaterra"—spoken by "Carlos, Embaxador de Francia, enamorado de Ana Bolena." Is there anything in Petrarch finer than the second stanza? <sup>1</sup>

Porque apenas el Sol se coronaba  
de nueva luz en la estacion primera,  
quando yo en sus umbrales adoraba  
segundo Sol en abreviada esfera;  
la noche apenas trémula baxaba,  
à solos mis deseos lisonjera,  
quando un jardin, republica de flores,  
era tercero fiel de mis amores.

Alli, el silencio de la noche fria,  
el jazmin, que en las redes se enlazava,  
el cristal de la fuente que corria,  
el arroyo que á solas murmurava,  
El viento que en las hojas se movia,  
el Aura que en las flores respirava;  
todo era amor; què mucho, si en tal calma  
aves, fuentes, y flores tienen alma!

No has visto providente y officiosa,  
mover el ayre iluminada aveya,  
que hasta beber la purpura á la rosa  
ya se acerca cobarde, y ya se aleja?  
No has visto enamorada mariposa,  
dar cercos á la luz, hasta que dexa,  
en monumento facil abrasadas  
las alas de color tornasoladas?

Assi mi amor, cobarde muchos dias,  
tornos hizo á la rosa y á la llama;  
temor che ha sido entre cenizas frias,  
tantas vezes llorado de quien ama;  
pero el amor, que vence con porrias,  
y la ocasion, que con disculpas llama,  
me animaron, y aveja y mariposa  
quemé las alas, y llegué á la rosa.

## 346. TO HENRY REVELEY

FLORENCE,

Nov[ember] 17, 1819.

MY DEAR HENRY,

I was exceedingly interested by your letter, and I cannot but thank you for overcoming the inaptitude of a long disuse at my request, for my pleasure. It is a great thing done, the successful casting of the cylinder—may it be a happy auspice for what is to follow! I hope, in a few posts, to remit the necessary money for the completion. Meanwhile, are not those portions of the work which can be done without expense, saving time in their progress? Do you think you lose much money or time by this delay?

All that you say of the alteration in the form of the boat strikes me, though one of the multitude in this respect, as improvement. I long to get aboard her, and be an unworthy partaker in the glory of the astonishment of the Livornese, when she returns from her cruise round Melloria. When do you think she will be fit for sea?

Your volcanic description of the birth of the cylinder is very characteristic of you, and of it.<sup>1</sup> One might

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<sup>1</sup> The following is the passage in Henry Reveley's letter to which Shelley alludes—

“Friday, Nov. 12.

“The event is now past—both the steam cylinder and air-pump were cast at three o'clock this afternoon. At two o'clock this morning I repaired to the mill to see that the preliminary operations, upon which the ultimate success of a *found* greatly depends, were conducted with proper attention. The moulds are buried in a pit, made close, before the mouth of the furnace, so that the melted metal, when the plug is driven in, may run easily into them, and fill up the vacant space left between the core and the shell, in order to form the desired cylinders. The fire was lighted in the furnace at nine, and in three hours the metal was fused. At three o'clock it was ready to cast, the fusion being remarkably rapid, owing to the perfection of the furnace. The metal was also heated to an extreme degree, boiling with fury, and seeming to dance with the pleasure of running into its proper form. The plug was struck, and a massy stream of a bluish dazzling whiteness filled the moulds in the twinkling of a shooting star. The castings will not be cool

imagine God, when he made the earth, and saw the granite mountains and flinty promontories flow into their craggy forms, and the splendour of their fusion filling millions of miles of the void space, like the tail of a comet, so looking, so delighting in his work. God sees his machine spinning round the sun, and delights in its success, and has taken out patents to supply all the suns in space with the same manufacture. Your boat will be to the ocean of water, what the earth is to the ocean of ether—a prosperous and swift voyager.

When shall we see you all? *You* not, I suppose, till your boat is ready to sail—and then, if not before, I must, of course, come to Livorno. Our plans for the winter are yet scarcely defined; they tend towards our spending February and March at Pisa, where our communications will not be so distant, nor so epistolary. Charles [Clairmont] left us a week ago, not without many lamentations, as all true lovers pay on such occasions. He is to write me an account of the *Trieste* steamboat, which I will transmit to you.

Mrs. Shelley and Miss Clairmont return you their kindest salutations, with interest.

Most affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

enough to be drawn up till to-morrow afternoon; but, to judge from all appearances, I expect them to be perfect."

"Saturday, Nov. 13.

"They have been excavated and drawn up. I have examined them and found them really perfect; they are massive and strong to bear any usage and sea-water, *in sæcula sæculorum*. I am now going on gently with the brass-work, which does not require any immediate expenses, and which I attend to entirely myself. I have no workmen about me at present.

"With kindest salutations to Mrs. Shelley and Miss Clairmont,

"I remain, most truly,

"Your obliged friend and devoted servant,

"HENRY W. REVELEY,"

347. TO AMELIA CURRAN  
(Rome)

FLORENCE,

Nov[ember] 18, 1819.

Your letter, my dear Miss Curran, arrived on the eve of Mary's confinement, and from the fear of agitating her on a subject which has never, until now, ceased to be a source of perpetual grief to her, I refrained from showing it to her, and consequently from answering it until the expected crisis had passed. She has now, a few days ago, brought me a fine little boy, after a labour of the very, very mildest character. She is exceedingly well at this moment.

We hear with great concern that you have had the malarial fever. Did you venture too soon to Rome? It is more like a sepulchre than a city; beautiful, but the abode of death. I hope we shall find you recovered as well from this attack as improved in your habitual health. I have suffered very much from a disease of the climate this summer, and the winter which awakens my old pains in my side is, contrary to custom, a relief to my sensation.

I do not think we shall bend our course towards the South until the spring, if indeed we can then do so.

Godwin has lost his law-suit about the rent of his house, and we are suddenly called upon for a large sum of money. This may necessitate my return to England for a few months. My family will, of course, remain in Italy. Do we not seem like a knot of persons destined to ill?

With respect to the subject in which you are so kind as to interest yourself for us, the larger pyramid has our approbation and, perhaps if we decided upon it, they would case entirely with white marble for the sum destined to this purpose. Their profit is probably absurdly great upon things of this kind, as they calculate that the regret of the survivors will induce them to comply

with whatever demand. Would it be necessary to decide upon the inscription before it is begun?

A thousand thanks to you about "The Cenci,"<sup>1</sup> but although my pleasure in possessing it will be very great, do not let me be the cause of fatigue or tiring to you. At the earliest we cannot be at Rome before March.

Believe me, my dear Miss Curran, with earnest wishes that we may find you in better health and happier than when we left you.

Yours most sincerely,

P. B. SHELLEY.

Mary desires her best love. We have heard from Venice, and all is going on well.

MISS CURRAN,  
64 Al. della Regna,  
via Sistina, Rome.

### 348. TO LEIGH HUNT

FLORENCE,

November, 1819.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Two letters, both bearing date Oct. 20, arrive on the same day; one is always glad of twins.

We hear of a box arrived at Genoa with books and clothes; it must be yours. Meanwhile the babe is wrapped in flannel petticoats, and we get on with him as we can. He is small, healthy, and pretty. Mary is recovering rapidly. Marianne, I hope, is quite well.

You do not tell me whether you have received my lines on the Manchester affair.<sup>2</sup> They are of the exoteric species,

<sup>1</sup> See Shelley's enquiry about Beatrice Cenci's portrait in his letter to Miss Curran of Aug. 5, 1819.

<sup>2</sup> "The Masque of Anarchy" was written at the Villa Valsovano, near Leghorn, on hearing the news of the Manchester massacre (see p. 714). Leigh Hunt did not print it in the *Examiner*, "because," as he says, "I thought that the public at large had not become sufficiently discerning to do justice to the sincerity and kind-heartedness of the spirit that walked in this flaming robe of verse." Ten

and are meant, not for the *Indicator*, but the *Examiner*. I would send for the former, if you like, some letters on such subjects of art as suggest themselves in Italy. Perhaps I will, at a venture, send you a specimen of what I mean next post. I enclose you in this a piece for the *Examiner*, or let it share the fate, whatever that fate may be, of the "Masque of Anarchy."

I am sorry to hear that you have employed yourself in translating the "Aminta,"<sup>1</sup> though I doubt not it will be a just and beautiful translation. You ought to write Amintas. You ought to exercise your fancy in the perpetual creation of new forms of gentleness and beauty.

With respect to translation, even *I* will not be seduced by it; although the Greek plays, and some of the ideal dramas of Calderon (with which I have lately, and with inexpressible wonder and delight, become acquainted) are perpetually tempting me to throw over their perfect and glowing forms the grey veil of my own words. And you know me too well to suspect that I refrain from a belief that what I could substitute for them would deserve the regret which yours would, if suppressed. I have confidence in my moral sense alone; but that is a kind of originality. I have only translated the "Cyclops" of Euripides, when I could absolutely do nothing else; and the "Symposium" of Plato, which is the delight and astonishment of all who read it; I mean the original, or so much

years after Shelley's death, Hunt published the poem with a preface, one of the best things he ever did, and with the following title: "The Masque of Anarchy. / A Poem. / By Percy Bysshe Shelley. / Now first published, with a Preface / By Leigh Hunt. / Hope is strong; / Justice and Truth their winged child have found. / Revolt of Islam. / London: / Edward Moxon, 64 New Bond Street. / 1832."

<sup>1</sup> Leigh Hunt's translation was afterwards published as "Amyntas; a Tale of the Woods. From the Italian of Torquato Tasso. 1820," and dedicated to John Keats.



supplies, and a weight is taken from my spirits, which, in spite of many other causes of discomfort, makes itself known to have been a heavy load, by the lightness which I now feel in writing to you.

So the steam-boat will take three months to finish? The vernal equinox will be over by that time, and the early wakening of the year have paved the Mediterranean with calm. Among other circumstances to regret in this delay, it is so far well that our first cruise will be made in serene weather.

I send you enclosed a mandate for 396 francesconi, which is what M. Torlonia incorrectly designates a hundred pounds—but as we count in the money of the country, that need make no difference to us.

I have just finished an additional act to "Prometheus," which Mary is now transcribing, and which will be enclosed for your inspection before it is transmitted to the bookseller. I am engaged in a political work—I am busy enough, and if the faculties of my mind were not imprisoned within a frame, whose bars are daily cares and vulgar difficulties, I might yet do something—but as it is——

Mary is well—but for this affair in London I think her spirits would be good. What shall I—what can I—what ought I to do? You cannot picture to yourself my perplexity.

Adieu, my dear friends.

Ever yours, faithfully attached,

P. B. S.

351. TO CHARLES OLLIER

FLORENCE,

December 15, 1819.

DEAR SIR,

Pray, give Mr. Procter<sup>1</sup> my best thanks for his polite

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<sup>1</sup> Bryan Waller Procter (1787-1874), who published several volumes of verse, "Dramatic Scenes," etc., under his pseudonym "Barry Cornwall." He admired the poetry of Shelley, who did not,

attention. I read the article you enclosed with the pleasure which every one feels, of course, when they are praised or defended; though the praise would have given me more pleasure if it had been less excessive. I am glad however, to see the *Quarterly* cut up, and that by one of their own people. Poor Southey has enough to endure. Do you know, I think the article in *Blackwood*<sup>1</sup> could not have been written by a favourer of Government and a religionist. I don't believe any such one could sincerely like my writings. After all, is it not some friend in disguise, and don't you know who wrote it?

There is one very *droll* thing in the *Quarterly*. They say that "My chariot-wheels are broken." Heaven forbid! My chariot, you may tell them, was built by one of the best makers in Bond Street, and it has gone several thousand miles in perfect security. What a comical thing it would be to make the following advertisement:—"A report having prevailed, in consequence of some insinuations in the *Quarterly Review*, that Mr. Shelley's chariot wheels are broken, Mr. Charters, of Bond Street, begs to assure the public that they, after having carried him through Italy, France, and Switzerland, still continue in excellent repair."

When the box comes, you may write a note to Mr. Peacock; or it would be better to call on him, and ask if *my tragedy is accepted*? If not, publish what you find in the box. I think it will succeed as a publication. Let "Prometheus" be printed without delay. You will receive the additions, which Mrs. S. is now transcribing,

however, return the compliment by liking Procter's. It is true that he does not speak ill of the "Dramatic Scenes" in this letter, and in No. 392A, but then these remarks were addressed to Ollier, who was Procter's publisher. See Shelley's letter to Mrs. Leigh Hunt, p. 839, on this subject.

<sup>1</sup> This article in the January number of *Blackwood's Magazine* on "The Revolt of Islam," was a generous tribute to Shelley's genius from the pen of John Wilson.

in a few days. It has already been read to many persons. My "Prometheus" is the best thing I ever wrote.

Pray, what have you done with "Peter Bell?" Ask Mr. Hunt for it, and for some other poems of a similar character I sent him to give you to publish. I think "Peter" not bad in his way; but perhaps no one will believe in anything in the shape of a joke from me.

Of course with my next box you will send me the "Dramatic Sketches." I have only seen the extracts in the *Examiner*. They have some passages painfully beautiful. When I consider the vivid energy to which the minds of men are awakened in this age of ours, ought I not to congratulate myself that I am a contemporary with names which are great, or will be great, or ought to be great?

Have you seen my poem, "Julian and Maddalo"? Suppose you print that in the manner of Hunt's "Hero and Leander"? for I mean to write three other poems, the scenes of which will be laid at Rome, Florence, and Naples, but the subjects of which will be all drawn from dreadful or beautiful realities, as that of this was.

If I have health—but I will neither boast nor promise. I am preparing an octavo on reform<sup>1</sup>—a commonplace kind of book—which, now that I see the passion of party will postpone the great struggle till another year, I shall not trouble myself to finish for this season. I intend it to be an instructive and readable book, appealing from the passions to the reason of men.

Yours very sincerely,

P. B. S.

352. TO LEIGH HUNT  
(London),

FLORENCE,

Dec[ember] 23, 1819.

MY DEAR HUNT,

Why don't you write to us? I was preparing to send

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<sup>1</sup> Probably "A Philosophical View of Reform." See note on p. 746.

you something for your "Indicator," but I have been a drone instead of a bee in this business, thinking that perhaps, as you did not acknowledge any of my late inclosures, it would not be welcome to you, whatever I might send. We have just received all your *Examiners* up to October 27th. I admire and approve most highly of those on religion; there is one very long one that especially pleases me. . . . Added days and years and hours add to my disapprobation of this odious superstition, and to my gratitude to anyone who like you break for ever its ever-gathering bubble.

What a state England is in! But you will never write politics. I don't wonder; but I wish that you would write a paper in the *Examiner* on the actual state of the country, and what, under all circumstances of the conflicting passions and interests of men, we are to expect,—not what we ought to expect or what if so and so were to happen we might expect—but what, as things are, there is reason to believe will come—and send it to me for my information. Every word a man has to say is valuable to the public now, and thus you will at once gratify your friend, nay instruct, and either exhilarate him, or force him to be resign'd, and awaken the minds of the people.

I have no spirits to write what I do not know whether you will care much about. I know well that, if I were in great misery, poverty, etc., you would think of nothing else but how to amuse and relieve me.—You omit me if I am prosperous. You are like Jesus who said he only came to heal the sick, when they reproached him for feasting with *publicans* and sinners.

I could laugh, if I found a joke, in order to put you in good-humour with me after my scolding; in good-humour enough to write to us. I suppose we shall soon have to fight in England. Affectionate love to and from all.

This ought not only to be the vail of a letter, but a superscription over the gate of life.

Your sincere friend,

P. B. SHELLEY.

I send you a *Sonnet*. I do not expect you to publish it, but you may show it to whom you please.

[Addressed outside],

Private,

LEIGH HUNT, Esq.,

*Examiner's* Office,

19 Catherine Street,

London,

Angleterre.

353. TO THOMAS MEDWIN  
(Geneva)

FLORENCE,

Jan. 17, 1820.

MY DEAR MEDWIN,

The winter in Florence has been, for the climate, unusually severe, and yet I imagine you must have suffered enough in Switzerland to make you regret that you did not come farther South. At least I confidently expect that we shall see you in the Spring. We are fixed for the ensuing year in Tuscany, and you will always find me by addressing me at Leghorn.

Perhaps you belong to the tribe of the hopeless, and nothing shocks or surprises you in politics.

I have enough of unrebuked hope remaining to be struck with horror at the proceedings in England; yet I reflect, as a last consolation, that oppression which authorizes often produces resistance. These are not times in which one has much spirit for writing poetry, although there is a keen air in them that sharpens the wits of men, and makes them imagine vividly even in the midst of despondence.

I daresay the lake before you is a plain of solid ice, bounded by the snowy hills, whose white mantles contrast with the ærial rose-colour of the eternal glaciers—a scene more grand, yet like the recesses of the Antarctic circle.

If your health allows you to skate, this plain is the floor of your Paradise, and the white world seems spinning backwards as you fly. The thaw may have arrived, or you may have departed, and this letter reach you in a very different scene.

This Italy, believe me, is a pleasant place, especially Rome and Naples. Tuscany is delightful eight months of the year; but nothing reconciles me to the slightest indication of winter, much less such infernal cold as my nerves have been racked upon for the last ten days. At Naples all the worst is over in three weeks. When you come hither, you must take up your abode with me, and I will give you all the experience which I have bought, at the usual market price, during the last year and a half residence in Italy.

You used, I remember, to paint very well, and you were remarkable, if I do not mistake, for a peculiar taste in and knowledge of the *belle arti*. Italy is the place for you, the very place—the Paradise of exiles, the retreat of Pariahs. But I am thinking of myself rather than of you. If you will be glad to see an old friend, who will be very glad to see you—if this is any inducement—come to Italy.

### 354. TO JOHN GISBORNE

FLORENCE,

Jan[uary] 25, 1820.

MY DEAR SIR,

We have suddenly taken the determination to avail ourselves of this lovely weather to approach you as far as Pisa.<sup>1</sup>—I need not assure you that within a few days—unless

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<sup>1</sup> "Shelley left Florence with Mary and Clare for Pisa, on the morning of January 26, 1820, and travelled by boat on the Arno as far as Empoli, when they left the boat and took a carriage for Pisa, which city they reached at about six in the evening. They lodged at the Tre Donzelle."—From Clare Clairmont's journal, quoted by Prof. Dowden.

my malady should violently return—you will see me at Leghorn.

We *embark* ; and I promise myself delight from the sky, and the water, and the mountains. I must suffer at any rate, but I expect to suffer less in a boat than in a carriage. —I have many things to say, which let me reserve until we meet.

I sympathise in all your good news, as I have done in your ill. Let Henry take care of himself, and not, desiring to combine too many advantages, check the progress of his recovery, the greatest of all.

Remember me affectionately to him and to Mrs. Gisborne, and accept for yourself my unalterable sentiments of regard. Meanwhile, *consider well your plans*, which I only half understand.

Ever most faithfully yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

## XVII. PISA AND LEGHORN

February 9—July 12, 1820

'THE Cenci' Refused—Lady Mountcashel—Medwin's Poems—  
Oliver's Shortcomings—"Julian and Maddalo"—Sant' Elmo  
—Correspondence with Southey—Shelley's Neapolitan—Trouble  
with Paolo—Godwin's Money Difficulties—A Poetical Letter to  
Maria Gisborne.

### 355. TO JOHN AND MARIA GISBORNE

PISA,

Feb[ruary] 9, 1820.

Pray let us see you soon, or our threat may cost both us and you something—a visit to Livorno. The stage direction on the present occasion is (exit Moonshine) and enter Wall; or rather four walls, who surround and take prisoners the Galan and Dama.

Seriously, pray do not disappoint us. We shall watch the sky, and the death of the scirocco must be the birth of your arrival.

Mary and I are going to study mathematics. We design to take the most compendious, yet certain methods of arriving at the great results. We believe that your right-angled Triangle will contain the solution of the problem of how to proceed.

Do not write, but *come*. Mary is too idle to write, but all that she has to say is *come*. She joins with me in condemning the moonlight plan. Indeed we ought not to be so selfish as to allow you to come at all, if it is to cost you all the fatigue and annoyance of returning the same night. But it will not be—so adieu.



## 356. TO CHARLES AND JAMES OLLIER

(London)

PISA,

March 6, 1820.

DEAR SIR,

I do not hear that you have received "Prometheus" and "The Cenci"; I therefore think it safest to tell you how and when to get them if you have not yet done so.

Give the bill of lading Mr. Gisborne sent you to a broker in the city, whom you employ to get the packages, and to pay the duty on the unbound books. The ship sailed in the middle of December, and will assuredly have arrived long before now.

"Prometheus Unbound," I must tell you, is my favourite poem; I charge you, therefore, specially to pet him and feed him with fine ink and good paper. "Cenci" is written for the multitude, and ought to sell well. I think, if I may judge by its merits, the "Prometheus" cannot sell beyond twenty copies. I hear nothing either from Hunt, or you, or any one. If you condescend to write to me, mention something about Keats.

Allow me particularly to request you to send copies of whatever I publish to Horace Smith.

Maybe you will see me in the summer; but in that case I shall certainly return to this "Paradise of Exiles"<sup>1</sup> by the ensuing winter.

If any of the Reviews abuse me, cut them out and send them. If they praise, you need not trouble yourself. I feel ashamed, if I could believe that I should deserve the latter; the former, I flatter myself, is no more than a just tribute.

<sup>1</sup> "Thou Paradise of Exiles, Italy!"—"Julian and Maddalo."

If Hunt praises me, send it, because that is of another character of things.

Dear Sir, yours very truly,  
PERCY B. SHELLEY.

Address to Mr. Gisborne, at Livoio.

Messrs. OLLIER,  
Booksellers,  
Vere Street, Bond Street,  
London, Angleterre, via Francia.

357. TO JOHN AND MARIA GISBORNE  
(Leghorn)

PISA,  
March 8, 1820.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I have written at a venture the letters which it seems to me are requisite. I have ordered my Florence banker to send you all that remains in his hands; you will receive it in a day or two, and tell me the amount. I will make up the deficiency from Pisa.

I inclose an outside calculation of the expenses at Naples calculated in ducats. I think it is as well to put into the hands of Del Rosso,<sup>1</sup> or whoever engages to do the business, 150 ducats—or more, as you see occasion—but on this you will favour me so far [as to]<sup>2</sup> allow your judgment to regulate mine.

A thousand thanks for your kindness and interest in me. Rivers flow to the sea, which is rich in fatness; whoever heard before of them hastening to the barren wilderness?

Adieu. Faithfully yours,  
P. B. S.

[Addressed], GIO. GISBORNE, Esq., Livoio.  
[Postmark], Pisa, M. 8. 1820.

<sup>1</sup> An attorney at Leghorn.

<sup>2</sup> Letter worn.

358. TO CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

PISA,

March 13, 1820.

DEAR SIR,

I am anxious to hear that you have received the parcel from Leghorn, and to learn what you are doing with the "Prometheus." If it can be done without great difficulty, I should be very glad that the *revised* sheets might be sent by the post to me at Leghorn. It might be divided into four partitions, sending me four or five sheets at once.

My friends here have great hopes that "The Cenci" will succeed as a publication. It was refused at Drury Lane,<sup>1</sup> although expressly written for theatrical exhibition, on a plea of the story being too horrible. I believe it singularly fitted for the stage.

Let me request you to give me frequent notice of my *literary interests* also.

I am, dear Sir,

Your very obliged servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

I hope you are not implicated in the late plot.<sup>2</sup> Not having heard from Hunt, I am afraid that he, at least, has something to do with it. It is well known, since the time of Jaffier, that a conspirator has no time to think about his friend

## 359. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

[Postmark: PISA,

March 25, 1820.]

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I have received your letter, and in a few days afterwards

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<sup>1</sup> From this it would appear that "The Cenci" was refused both at Drury Lane and Covent Garden, but it has been suggested that Shelley intended to write "Covent Garden" in this letter. (See p. 772.)

<sup>2</sup> "The Cato Street Conspiracy,"—Lady Shelley's note,

that of Beck and English, and I inclose you theirs<sup>1</sup> and my answer.

You know how incapable I am of paying this sum or any portion of it—I have written to them a plain statement of the [case] and a plain account of my situation.—They are aware [that] they must ultimately have the money, and I think by [the] interposition of your kind offices the affair may be arranged.—

I see with deep regret in to-day's Papers the attempt to to (*sic*) assassinate the Ministry. Every thing seems to conspire against Reform.—How Cobbett must laugh at the "resumption of gold payments." I long to see him.

I have a motto on a ring in Italian—"Il buon tempo verrà." There is a tide both in public and private affairs, which awaits both men and nations.

I have no news from Italy. We live here under a nominal tyranny administered according to the philosophic laws of Leopold, and the mild opinions which are the fashion here. . . . Tuscany is unlike all the other Italian States in this respect.

That Longdill is a most insolent rascal; and I shall take the first occasion of ridding myself of him.—

If Madocks applies to you, I wish you would tell him that I shall take care to pay him with full interest on the first opportunity, and that if he wishes security I will give him it, in any shape he wishes.

<sup>1</sup> The letter from Beck and English above referred to is dated "Bath, 18th Feby., 1820. It expresses disappointment that Shelley had not agreeably to promise paid one moiety of a debt contracted in 1817.—Expecting that as a gentleman and man of honour he will give a reference for payment of £500 in part of the debt.—Expressing surprise that on going to his late house at Marlow, they learnt that the furniture he purchased of them was sold almost as soon as bought; and at the circumstance that he should leave England without any arrangement for the payment of their demand, or even favouring them with his address.—Unless he complies with their request, they shall feel perfectly justified in taking the only step, which their legal advisers tell them, can be taken against a debtor out of the kingdom."—Peacock's note.

360. TO LEIGH HUNT  
(London)

PISA,

April 5, 1820.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

You may conceive the surprise and sorrow with which I hear both from you and Bessy, whom I wrote to for the purpose of having some information about your money affairs, that you have undergone all the torments which your letter describes. When I reflect too that I begun for you what I was unable to finish, and that having intended to set you free, I left you in the midst of those accumulating perplexities from which you must have suffered so dreadfully, these regrets touch me personally. But your letter persuades me that things will go on better, and meanwhile I may see you.

There is one subject connected with the actual state of my financial imbecility about which I wish your assistance. I believe the bills for my piano and yours came due this year. Of course you know that in the question of a just debt I am totally incapable of taking advantage of my residence abroad, and especially in a debt so contracted. But I have not the money to pay it instantly. Could you solicit for me a renewal of it? Of course the Pianoforte maker is afraid of the ultimate payment, or I would do anything he requires to assure him of it further. And I would consent to make him any compensation he chose for the delay; and if he will accept nothing of that kind, will do my best when it is in my power to make him no loser by his forbearance. I forget how this affair was arranged, but if I rightly recollect it was through Novello's mediation. I cannot but be anxious to stand well in the estimation of so excellent and friendly a person as Novello, and I should therefore consider it as a special act of friendship in you to explain this business, and arrange it for me without loss of time.

We are living here very considerably within our income, on which we have unfortunately heavy claims which I will take another occasion of explaining. But if we go on as now we shall soon get up. We have pleasant apartments on the Arno, at the top of a house, where we just begin to feel our strength, for we have been cooped up in narrow rooms all this severe winter, and I have been irritated to death for the want of a study. I have done nothing, therefore, until this month, and now we begin our accustomed literary occupations. We see no one but an Irish lady and her husband,<sup>1</sup> who are settled here. She is everything that is amiable and wise, and he is very agreeable. You will think it my fate either to find or to imagine some lady of 45, very unprejudiced and philosophical, who has entered deeply into the best and selectest spirit of the age, with enchanting manners, and a disposition rather to like me, in every town that I inhabit. But certainly such this lady is.

We shall remain in Pisa until June, when we migrate to the Baths of Lucca ; and after that our destination is uncertain. Much stress is laid upon a still more southern climate for my health, which has suffered dreadfully this winter, and if I could believe that Spain would be effectual, I might possibly be tempted to make a voyage thither, on account of the glorious events of which it is at this moment the theatre. You know my passion for a republic, or anything which approaches it.

I am extremely curious to see your tragedy. It appears to me that you excel in the power of delineating passion, and, what is more necessary, of connecting and developing it. This latter part of a dramatic writer's business is to me an incredible effort ; if I have in any degree succeeded, I shall have at least earned the applause. But to you this is easy. As to your being out of conceit with your tragedy, I assure myself that it is only the effect of criticism upon

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Mason (Lady Mountcashel) and Mr. Tighe (see p.

the nerves. At all events the moment it is printed send it to me. Meanwhile I am curious to hear what you think of mine.<sup>1</sup> I am afraid the subject will not please you, but at least you will read my justification of it in the preface. I lay much stress upon that argument against a diversity of opinion to be produced by works of imagination. The very Theatre rejected it with expressions of the greatest insolence. I feel persuaded that they must have guessed at the author. But about all this I don't much care. But of all that I have lately sent, "Prometheus" is my favourite.

We hear that there is no chance of seeing you in Italy—and yet how much you would enjoy it—and how much we should enjoy your society! For you should come to Rome, which is the metropolis of taste and memory still,—and we would see the fine pictures and statues together, and the ruins, things greater than I can give you a conception of.

For the present adieu. Write to me especially about your affairs, and whether they proceed in the same good train.

Adieu.—Mary desires her love to you all.

Your affectionate

P. B. S.

I don't remember if I acknowledged the receipt of "Robin Hood"—no more did you of "Peter Bell." There's tit for tat! I thought the introductory verses very pretty, but I think you diluted yourself by the measure you chose. Then Thornton's *esquisse de la législation*, from which no doubt both Bentham and Beccaria have plagiarised all their discourses, accommodating them to the notions of the vulgar. Then on my side is the letter to Carli, in which I must tell you I was considerably interested.

[Addressed outside],

LEIGH HUNT, Esq.,

13 Mortimer Terrace,

Kentish Town, near London,

Inglaterra.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Cenci." See p. 768.

361. TO THOMAS MEDWIN  
(Geneva)

PISA,

April 16, 1820.

MY DEAR MEDWIN,

I have delayed answering your letter and sending you my ideas on its valuable accompaniment in consequence of an inexplicable impiccio of the Genoese post, which got hold of your last communication, and which yet rests to be cleared up. I determined, so soon as I found that the measures for obtaining it from them were drawn out to a hopeless length, to write immediately and intreat you to send me a duplicate by Dejean's Diligence, which goes to Florence, and addressed to me at Mr. Klieber's the banker there, who will immediately forward it to me. I conjecture that it must be the *printed* book<sup>1</sup> which you mention in your letter; I am consoled by reflecting that the loss and annoyance is less than if it had been a MS.

The volume of which you speak, if it resemble the "Pindarees,"<sup>2</sup> I cannot doubt is calculated to produce a considerable sensation. That Poem is highly fit for popularity, considered in its subject; there being a strong demand in the imagination of our contemporaries for the scenery and situations which you have studied. I admire equally the richness and variety of the imagery with the ease and profusion of language in which it is expressed.

Perhaps the severe criticism of a friend, jealous of every error, might discern some single lines and expressions which may be conceived to be changed for the better. But these are few, and I by no means conceive myself qualified to do more than point them out; and if I should

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the printed book to which Shelley refers was Medwin's "Oswald and Edwin: an Oriental Sketch," printed at Geneva in Feb., 1820, by J. J. Paschoud.

<sup>2</sup> "The Pindarees" is the title of a poem in Thomas Medwin's "Sketches in Hindoostan with other Poems." (London, Ollier, 1821.)



incur, as is probable, the charge of hypercriticism, you will know to what motives and feelings to impute it. I will enclose your "Pindarees" by the next post, with a list of these, and such corrections, since you ask me for them, as I can best make. But remember, I will not vouch for their not being much inferior to the passages they supplant. —The only general error, if it be such, in your poem, seems to me to be the employment of Indian words, in the body of the piece, and the relegation of their meaning to the notes. Strictly, I imagine, every expression in a poem ought to be in itself an intelligible picture. But this practice, though foreign to that of the great poets of former times, is so highly admired by our contemporaries that I can hardly counsel you to dissent. And then you have Moore and Lord Byron on your side, who, being much better and more successful poets than I am, may be supposed to know better the road to success than one who has sought and missed it.

I am printing some things which I am vain enough to wish you to see.<sup>1</sup> Not that they will sell; they are the reverse, in this respect, of the razors in "Peter Pindar." A man like me can in fact only be a poet by dint of stinting himself of meat and drink to pay his printer's bill—that is, he can only print poems on this condition.—But there is every reason to hope better things for you.

You will find me at Pisa in the autumn. Pisa until December will be an excellent climate for you, nor am I aware that Naples or Sicily would be more favourable, all things considered. The sun is certainly warmer, but unless you fit up a house expressly for the purpose of warmth, the Tramontana will enter by a thousand crevices, charged with frozen and freezing atoms. I suffered dreadfully at Naples from the cold, far more than at Florence, where I had a warm room, spending two successive winters in those cities. We shall at all events be at Pisa in the autumn,

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<sup>1</sup> "Prometheus Unbound; and other Poems."

and I am almost certain we shall remain during the whole winter in a pleasant villa outside the gates. We will make you as comfortable as we can, but our *ménage* is too philosophic to abound in much external luxury. The rest must be made up in good-will—Mrs. Shelley desires me to say how acceptable your visit will be to her. If you should come before the autumn, we shall be at the Baths of Lucca, a delightful place, about thirty miles from this town. You will find me a wretched invalid unless a great change should take place.

As to the expense of Italy—why it is a very cheap place. A crown here goes as far as a pound note in England in all affairs of eating and drinking. The single article of clothes is the same. Geneva seems to me to be about as dear as England; but I may have been horribly cheated.

I ought to tell you that we do not enter into society. The few people we see are those who suit us,—and I believe nobody but us. I find saloons and compliments too great bores; though I am of an extremely social disposition. I hope if they come to Italy I may see the lady and your friend.<sup>1</sup> Though I have never had the ague, I have found these sort of beings, especially the former, of infinite service in the maladies to which I am subject; and I have no doubt, if it could be supposed that anyone would neglect to employ such a medicine, that the best physicians would prescribe them, although they have been entered in no pharmacopœia.

Forgive my joking on what all poets ought to consider a sacred subject.—Courage! when we meet we will sit upon our melancholy and disorders, bind them like an evil genius and bury them in the Tyrrhene sea, nine fathoms deep.—Adieu.

Affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

<sup>1</sup> As Mr. Buxton Forman says, this probably refers to Edward and Jane Williams. See Shelley's poem, "The Magnetic Lady."

## 362 To JOHN AND MARIA GISBORNE

PISA,

April 23, 1820.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

We are much pained to hear of the illness you all seem to have been suffering, and still more at the apparent dejection of your last letter. We are in daily expectation this lovely weather of seeing you, and I think the change of air and scene might be good for your health and spirits, even if *we* cannot enliven you. I shall have some business at Livorno soon; and I thought of coming to fetch you, but I have changed my plan, and mean to return with you, that I may save myself two journeys.

I have been thinking, and talking, and reading Agriculture this last week. But I am very anxious to see you, especially now as instead of six hours, you give us thirty-six, or perhaps more. I shall hear of the steam-engine, and you will hear of *our* plans when we meet, which will be in so short a time, that I neither inquire nor communicate.

Ever affectionately yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

## 363. To LEIGH HUNT

PISA,

May 1, 1820.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

In a few days after the arrival of this letter you may expect a visit from the Gisbornes, who are now on the point of setting out to England. The lady you will think delightful, if you take the trouble to make her talk to you. I received your welcome letter,<sup>1</sup> and the most welcome praises of my book which it contained. I confess I did not expect it to be so successful with you, or with anyone,

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<sup>1</sup> Apparently Leigh Hunt's letter to Shelley of March 1, 1821, in which he praises "*Prometheus Unbound*."

although it was written with a certain view to popularity, a view to which I sacrificed my own peculiar notions in a certain sort by treating of any subject, the basis of which is moral error. That you and that a few chosen judges should approve of it, however the chief aim of my ambition, outweighs the censure of "a whole theatre of others." I shall be anxious to see the passage in the *Examiner* about my book, but I confess that I desire a more sincere satisfaction from your private opinion, when I know that no friendship could induce you to soften any disapprobation you might feel.—As to Ollier, I am afraid his demerits are very heavy: they must have been so before *you* could have perceived them. I should like to know how he has behaved, though I strongly suspect what the affair is (*Paper torn.*) I am afraid that I to a certain degree am in his power; there being no other bookseller upon whom I can depend for publishing any of my works; though if by any chance they should become popular, he would be as tame as a lamb. And in fact they are all rogues. It is less the character of the individual than the situation in which he is placed which determines him to be honest or dishonest, perhaps we ought to regard an honest bookseller, or an honest seller of anything else in the present state of human affairs as a kind of Jesus Christ. The system of society as it exists at present must be overthrown from the foundations with all its superstructure of maxims and of forms before we shall find anything but disappointment in our intercourse with any but a few select spirits. This remedy does not seem to be one of the easiest. But the generous few are not the less held to tend with all their efforts towards it. If faith is a virtue in any case it is so in politics rather than religion; as having a power of producing a belief in that which is at once a prophecy, and a cause. So far the Preacher.—The Gisbornes stay in London about six weeks, and I have asked Hogg to come and see me in Italy; so possibly he will return with them. I dare not hope that you will add yourself to the party.

I tried to get your "Decameron," etc., at Leghorn, and Pisa, to send with them, but was unsuccessful. It is to be had at Florence, and will be sent with some vases destined for Horace Smith; these vases are copies from the antique in alabaster, and I think will please you.<sup>1</sup> I wish to ask you if you know of any bookseller who would like to publish a little volume of *popular songs* wholly political, and destined to awaken and direct the imagination of the reformers. I see you smile, but answer my question. Of the politics of the day you never speak—I only see a Paris paper in English filled with extracts from the *Courier*.—I suppose you know that my tragedy has been republished in Paris in English.<sup>2</sup>

(Written by Mary Shelley)

Do you know that you might write much longer letters if [you] wrote closer—besides at the top of each page you leave a full inch. As you are so much accustomed to this way of writing that you could not easily break yourself of it, suppose when you came to the end of your paper you turned it topsy-turvy and interlined it all the way.—I wish Marianne could write, but how can she? Bessy might; her last letter was 6th of January.

Ever yours,

M. W. S[HELLEY].

The Gisbornes will bring a little present for Marianne. I wish it had been more valuable or useful, [but did] not like letting you see friends from us without anything from us.

<sup>1</sup> These vases are now in the possession of Mr. Round, of Brighton, who married a daughter of Horace Smith.

<sup>2</sup> This was probably an error; no Paris reprint of "The Cenci" in Paris has been traced. It is possible that Shelley had seen an advertisement of the Italian edition in Galignani's list.

364. TO THOMAS MEDWIN  
(Geneva)

(Fragment)<sup>1</sup> PISA, May 1, 1820.

*no antidote could know.*

Suppose you craze line 24 which seems superfluous, as one does not see why Oswald shunned the *chase* in particular.

So you will put in what you think are amendments, and which I have proposed because they appeared such to me. The poem is certainly very beautiful. I think the conclusion rather morbid; that a man should kill himself is one thing, but that he should live on in the dismal way that poor Oswald does is too much. But it is the spirit of the age, and we are all infected with it. Send me as soon as you can copies of your printed poems.

I have just published a tragedy called "The Cenci," and I see they have reprinted it at Paris at Galignani's. I dare say you will see the French edition, full of errors, of course, at Geneva. The people from England tell me it is liked. It is dismal enough. My chief endeavour was to produce a delineation of passions which I had never participated in, in chaste language, and according to the rules of enlightened art. I don't think very much of it, but it is for you to judge.

Particularly, my dear friend, write to me an account of your motions, and when and where we may expect to see you. Are you not tempted by the Baths of Lucca?

I have been seriously ill since I last wrote to you, but I am now recovering.

Affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Buxton Forman says: "this is the outside leaf of a letter, curiously addressed to 'To Medwin, Esq., Gentilhomme Anglais, Genève.'" He also says that Oswald, mentioned below, is the hero both of "The Lion Hunt" and of "The Pindarees." See note at page 773. The line which Shelley calls line 24 is one of a triplet; and metre and sense would both have been complete without it, but Medwin retained it. It is on page 81 of the volume.

"And all employment shunned, but most the chase."

## 365. TO MARIA GISBORNE

May 8, 1820.

I wonder what makes Mary think her letter worth the trouble of opening—except, indeed, she conceives it to be a delight to decipher a difficult scrawl. She might as well have put, as I will—

"MY DEAR SIR,

? ? ? ! ! !

Yours, etc.

Take care of yourselves, and do *you* not forget your nightly journal. The silent dews renew the grass without effort in the night. I mean to write to you, but not to day. All happiness attend you, my dear friend! As an excuse for mine and Mary's incurable stupidity, I send a little thing about poets, which is itself a kind of excuse for Wordsworth.

## 366. TO CHARLES OLLIER

(London)

PISA,

May 14, 1820.

DEAR SIR,

I reply to your letter by return of post, to confirm what I said in a former letter respecting a new edition of "The Cenci," which ought by all means to be instantly urged forward.

I see by your account that I have been greatly mistaken in my calculations of the *profit* of my writings. As to the trifle due to me, it may as well remain in your hands; and indeed my only object in writing to draw on you was that I might pay the printers, especially Reynell,<sup>1</sup> who has written to me twice, and [to] which purpose, as is just I

<sup>1</sup> C. H. Reynell was the printer of several of Shelley's books including "History of a Six Weeks' Tour," 1817. In an unpublished letter, dated Pisa, April 30, 1820, to Ollier, Shelley tells him that Reynell the printer has sent in his account for that work.

destined the fund, which seems to be a *sinking* one, of the proceeds of my verses.

As to the printing of the "Prometheus," be it as you will. But, in this case, I shall repose or trust in your care respecting the correction of the press; especially in the lyrical parts, where a minute error would be of much consequence. Mr. Gisborne will revise it; he heard it recited, and will therefore more readily seize any error.

If I had even intended to publish "Julian and Maddalo" with my name, yet I would not print it with "Prometheus." It would not harmonize. It is an attempt in a different style, in which I am not yet sure of myself, a *sermo pedestris* way of treating human nature, quite opposed to the idealism of that drama. If you print "Julian and Maddalo," I wish it to be printed in some unostentatious form, accompanied with the fragment of "Athanasia," and exactly in the manner in which I sent it, and I particularly desire that my name be not annexed to the first edition of it, in any case.

If "Peter Bell" be printed (you can best judge if it will sell or no, and there would be no other reason for printing such a trifle), attend, I pray you, particularly to completely concealing the author; and for Emma read Betty, as the name of Peter's sister. Emma, I recollect, is the real name of the sister of a great poet who might be mistaken for Peter. I ought to say that I send you poems in a few posts, to print at the end of "Prometheus," better fitted for that purpose than any in your possession.

Keats, I hope, is going to show himself a great poet; like the sun, to burst through the clouds, which, though dyed in the finest colours of the air, obscured his rising. The Gisbornes will bring me from you copies of whatever may be published when they leave England. My best regards to your brother.

Dear Sir,

Yours faithfully,

P. B. SHELLEY.



## 367. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

PISA,

May 16, 1820.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I congratulate you most sincerely on your choice and on your marriage. If you had married Marianne I should never have seen much of you, and now I have at least a chance. I was very much amused by your laconic account of the affair.<sup>1</sup> It is altogether extremely like the *dénouement* of one of your own novels, and as such serves to a theory I once imagined, that in everything any man ever wrote, spoke, acted, or imagined, is contained, as it were, an allegorical idea of his own future life, as the acorn contains the oak.

But not to ascend in my balloon. I have written to Hogg to ask him to pay me a visit, and though I had no hope of success, I commissioned him to endeavour to bring *you*. This becomes still more improbable from your news; but I need not say that your amiable mountaineer would make you still more welcome. My friends, the Gisbornes, are now really on their way to London, where they propose to stay only six weeks. I think you will like Mrs. Gisborne. Henry is an excellent fellow, but not very communicative. If you find anything in the shape of dulness or otherwise to endure in Mr. Gisborne, endure it for the lady's sake and mine; but for Heaven's sake! do not let him know that I think him stupid. Indeed, perhaps I do him an injustice,<sup>2</sup> though certainly he prosés. Hogg will find it very agreeable

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<sup>1</sup> Peacock married in 1820 Jane Gryffyd, daughter of the vicar of Elwys, the "Beauty of Carnarvonshire," to whom Shelley refers in his poetical letter to Maria Gisborne as "the milk-white Snowdonian antelope."

<sup>2</sup> "I think he did. I found Mr. Gisborne an agreeable and well-informed man. He and his amiable and accomplished wife have long been dead. I should not have printed what Shelley says of him if any person were living whom the remembrance could annoy."—Peacock's note.

(if he postpones his visit so long, or if he visits me at all) to join them on their return. I wish you, and Hogg, and Hunt, and—I know not who besides—would come and spend some months with me together in this wonderful land.

We know little of England here. I take in Galignani's paper, which is filled with extracts from the *Courier*, and from those accounts it appears probable that there is but little unanimity in the mass of the people; and that a civil war impends from the success of ministers and the exasperation of the poor. I wait anxiously for your Cobbetts—but I learn that the Lyminstry is yet in the Shaines. [?]

I see my tragedy has been republished in Paris; if that is the case, it ought to sell in London; but I hear nothing from Ollier.

I have suffered extremely this winter; but I feel myself most materially better at the return of spring. I am on the whole greatly benefited by my residence in Italy, and, but for certain moral causes, should probably have been enabled to reinstate my system completely. Believe me, my dear Peacock, yours very sincerely,

P. B. S.

Pray make my best regards acceptable to your new companion.

368. TO JOHN AND MARIA GISBORNE  
(London)

PISA,

May 26, 1820.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I write to you thus early, because I have determined to accept of your kind offer about the correction of "Prometheus." The bookseller makes difficulties about sending the proofs to me, and to whom else can I so well entrust what I am so much interested in having done well; and to whom would I prefer to owe the recollection of an additional

kindness done to me? I enclose you two little papers of corrections and additions;—I do not think you will find any difficulty in interpolating them into their proper places.

Well, how do you like London, and your journey; the Alps in their beauty and their eternity; Paris in its slight and transitory colours; and the wearisome plains of France—and the *moral* people with whom you drank tea last night? Above all, *how* are you? And of the last question, believe me, we are anxiously waiting for a reply—until which I will say nothing, nor ask anything. I rely on the journal<sup>1</sup> with as much security as if it were already written.

I am just returned from a visit to Leghorn, Casciano, and our old fortress at Sant' Elmo. I bought the vases you saw for about twenty sequins less than Micale asked, and had them packed up, and, by the polite assistance of your friend, Mr. Guebard, sent them on board. I found your Giuseppe very useful in all this business. He got me tea and breakfast, and I slept in your house, and departed early the next morning for Casciano. Everything seems in excellent order at Casa Ricci—garden, pigeons, tables, chairs, and beds. As I did not find my bed sealed up, I left it as I found it. What a glorious prospect you had from the windows of Sant' Elmo! The enormous chain of the Apennines, with its many-folded ridges, islanded in the misty distance of the air; the sea, so immensely distant, appearing as at your feet; and the prodigious expanse of the plain of Pisa, and the dark green marshes lessened almost to a strip by the height of the blue mountains overhanging them. Then the wild and unreclaimed fertility of the foreground, and the chestnut trees, whose vivid foliage made a sort of resting-place to the sense before it darted itself to the jagged horizon of this prospect. I was altogether delighted. I had a respite from my nervous symptoms, which was compensated to me by a violent cold

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Gisborne's journal now in the collection of Mr. H. Buxton Forman. See p. 780.

in the head. There was a tradition about you at Sant' Elmo—*An English family that had lived here in the time of the French*. The doctor, too, at the Bagni, knew you. The house is in a most dilapidated condition, but I suppose all that is curable.

We go to the Bagni <sup>1</sup> next month—but still direct to Pisa as safest. I shall write to you the *ultimates* of my commission in my next letter. I am undergoing a course of the Pisan baths, on which I lay no singular stress—but they soothe. I ought to have peace of mind, leisure, tranquillity; this I expect soon. Our anxiety about Godwin is very great, and any information that you could give a day or two earlier than he might, respecting any decisive event in his law-suit, would be a great relief. Your impressions about Godwin (I speak especially to Madonna mia, who had known him before), will especially interest me. You know that added years only add to my admiration of his intellectual powers, and even the moral resources of his character. Of my other friends I say nothing. To see Hunt is to like him; and there is one other recommendation which he has to you, he is my friend. To know H[ogg?], if anyone can know him, is to know something very unlike, and inexpressibly superior, to the great mass of men.

Will Henry write me an adamantine letter, flowing not like the words of Sophocles, with honey, but molten brass and iron, and bristling with wheels and teeth? I saw his steamboat asleep under the walls. I was afraid to waken it, and ask it whether it was dreaming of him, for the same reason that I would have refrained from awakening Ariadne, after Theseus had left her—unless I had been Bacchus.

Affectionately and anxiously yours,

P. B. S.

<sup>1</sup> "Baths of natural warm spring, distant four miles from Pisa, and called indifferently Bagni di Pisa, and Bagni di San Giuliano,"—Mrs. Shelley's note.

## 369. TO JOHN AND MARIA GISBORNE

(London)

[Summer, 1820.]

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I am to a certain degree indifferent as to the reply to our last proposal, and, therefore, will not allude to it. Permit me only on subjects of this nature to express one sentiment, which you would have given me credit for, even if not expressed. Let no consideration of *my* interest, or any retrospect to the source from which the funds were supplied, modify your decision as to returning and pursuing or abandoning the adventure of the steam-engine. My object was solely your true advantage, and it is when I am baffled of this, by any attention to a mere form, that I shall be ill-requited. Nay, more, I think it for your interest, should you obtain almost whatever situation for Henry, to accept Clementi's proposal,<sup>1</sup> and remain in England;—not without accepting it, for it does no more than balance the difference of expense between Italy and London; and if you have any trust in the justice of my moral sense, and believe that in what concerns true honour and virtuous conduct in life, I am an experienced counsellor, you will not hesitate—these things being equal—to accept this proposal. The opposition I made, while you were in Italy, to the abandonment of the steamboat project, was founded, you well know, on the motives which have influenced everything that ever has guided, or ever will guide anything that I can do or say respecting you. I thought it against Henry's interest. I think it now against his interest that he and you should abandon your prospects in England. As to us—we are uncertain people, who are chased by the spirits of our destiny from purpose to purpose, like clouds by the wind.

There is one thing more to be said. If you decide to remain in England, assuredly it would be foolish to return.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Buxton Forman says that Clementi had offered to give Mrs. Gisborne music lessons.

Your journey would cost you between £100 and £200, a sum far greater than you could expect to save by the increased price by which you would sell your things. Remit the matter to me, and I will cast off my habitual character, and attend to the minutest points. With Mr. G——'s,<sup>1</sup> devil take his name, I can't write it,—you know who's, assistance, all this might be accomplished in such a manner as to save a very considerable sum. Though I shall suffer from your decision in the proportion as your society is delightful to me, I cannot forbear expressing my persuasion, that the time, the expense, and the trouble of returning to Italy, if your ultimate decision be to settle in London, ought all to be spared. A year, a month, a week, at Henry's age, and with his purposes, ought not to be unemployed. It was the depth with which I felt this truth, which impelled me to incite him to this adventure of the steamboat.

### 370. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

PISA,

June 26, 1820.

DEAR SIR,

Some friends of mine persist in affirming that you are the author of a criticism which appeared some time since in the *Quarterly Review* on the "Revolt of Islam."<sup>2</sup>

I know nothing that would give me more sincere pleasure than to be able to affirm from your own assurance that you were not guilty of that writing. I confess I see such strong internal evidence against the charge, without reference to what I think I know of the generous sensibility of your character, that had my own conviction only been concerned, I should never have troubled you to deny what I firmly believe you would have spurned to do.

<sup>1</sup> Probably Guebhard, the Leghorn merchant and banker.

<sup>2</sup> See note to Shelley's letter to Ollier, Oct. 15, 1819.

Our short personal intercourse has always been remembered by me with pleasure, and (when I recalled the enthusiasm with which I then considered your writings,) with gratitude for your notice. We parted, I think, with feelings of mutual kindness. The article in question, except in reference to the possibility of its having been written by you, is not worth a moment's attention.

That an unprincipled hireling, in default of what to answer in a published composition, should, without provocation, insult the domestic calamities of a writer of the adverse party—to which perhaps their victim dares scarcely advert in thought—that he should make those calamities the theme of the foulest and the falsest slander—that all this should be done by a calumniator without a name—with the cowardice, no less than the malignity, of an assassin—is too common a piece of charity among Christians (Christ would have taught them better), too common a violation of what is due from man to man among the pretended friends of social order, to have drawn one remark from me, but that I would have you observe the arts practised by that party for which you have abandoned the cause to which your early writings were devoted. I had intended to have called on you, for the purpose of saying what I now write, on my return to England; but the wretched state of my health detains me here, and I fear leaves my enemy, were he such as I could deign to contend with, an easy, but a base victory, for I do not profess paper warfare. But there is a time for all things.

I regret to say that I shall consider your neglecting to answer this letter a substantiation of the fact which it is intended to settle—and *therefore* I shall assuredly hear from you.

Dear Sir, accept the best wishes of

Yours truly,

P. B. SHELLEY.

371. TO JOHN AND MARIA GISBORNE  
(London)

[LEGHORN,]

June 30, 1820.

(Fragments)

I will not play a double part, and therefore I leave you to accept or reject the proposal contained in Mary's letter as shall suit your convenience or your feelings. I would impose one condition alone. If you perceive that the money will not fulfil its object, or that you cannot enforce the intended appropriation of it, I entreat you to refuse to lend it at all. You know my situation ; you know Godwin's implacable exactions ; you know his boundless and plausible sophistry. On the other hand, if you can effect this compromise, the benefit would be great. But in this, as in everything else, act with your usual high-minded sincerity. . . . If you have any communications unfit for Mary's agitated mind to make to me, address to me under cover to Mrs. Mason. . . .<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In Oct., 1819, Godwin had lost an action that had been brought against him for the payment of the rent of his house in Skinner Street, which he had long occupied rent-free. Godwin had understood that Shelley was willing to pay him a sum of £500 in quarterly instalments of £50, "the payment," says Prof. Dowden, "was delayed and Godwin's anxieties became intolerable. By some accident of the post, a letter of complaint and remonstrance, addressed to Mary, did not reach her until some seven weeks had passed. 'Do not let me be led into a fool's paradise,' Godwin wrote. 'It is better to look my ruin full in the face at once, than to be amused for ever with promises, at the same time that nothing is done. . . . If Shelley will not immediately send me such bills as I propose or as you offer, my next request is, that he will let me alone, or not disturb the sadness of my shipwreck by holding out false lights, and deluding me with appearances of relief, when no relief is at hand.' By midsummer £100, advanced by Horace Smith, had been paid to Godwin; but he was urgent to get speedily into his hands the entire sum which, as he asserted, had been promised. Shelley, he assured Mrs. Gisborne, who was now a visitor at Skinner Street, had treated him cruelly and unjustly, and would



My poor Neapolitan,<sup>1</sup> I hear has a severe fever of dentition. I suppose she will die and leave another memory to these which already torture me. I am waiting the next post with anxiety but without much hope. What remains to me? Domestic peace and fame? You will laugh when you hear me talk of the latter; indeed it is only a shadow. The seeking of a sympathy with the unborn and the unknown is a feeble mood of allaying the love within us; and even that is beyond the grasp of so weak an aspirant as I. Domestic peace I might have—I may have—if I see you I shall have—but have not, for Mary suffers dreadfully about the state of Godwin's circumstances. I am very nervous, but better in general health. We have had a most infernal business with Paolo<sup>2</sup> whom, however we have succeeded in crushing. . . .

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certainly be the death of him. The proposal in Mary's letter was for Mr. Gisborne to lend Godwin £400, for which Shelley would make himself responsible. He was, however, unable or unwilling to advance this sum, and it remained for Shelley to inform Godwin that he could not be his perpetual preserver and deliverer."—"Life of Shelley," II, 321-3. (See Letters Nos. 377 and 379.)

<sup>1</sup> "At Naples in the midsummer of 1820, there died a little girl in whom Shelley was deeply interested, and who was to some extent placed in his charge or wardship. Shelley's reason for informing Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne of the child's illness was that they were acquainted with the facts. Medwin states that while Shelley was at Naples he became the innocent actor in a tragedy more extraordinary than any to be found in the pages of romance." The unhappy lady [here referred to] had arrived at Naples on the very day of Shelley's arrival. There they met, and there, as Shelley declared to Medwin, she died. From Mr. Rossetti we learn that Miss Clairmont asserted that she was acquainted with the lady's name, and had even seen her at Naples. Can it be that she requested Shelley on her death-bed to act as guardian of her infant child, and that this child was his poor Neapolitan who died of teething-fever in the summer of 1820?"—Dowden's "Shelley," II, 252.

<sup>2</sup> The Paolo mentioned here had been Shelley's servant and had been dismissed at Naples for robbery of his master and shameful conduct towards Elise. As soon as Shelley became aware of Paolo's designs, he visited Leghorn and put the matter in the hands of Del Rosso, the attorney of that place. The Shelleys thought that they had succeeded in crushing Paolo, but unfortunately they were mistaken. The rascal took the first opportunity of revenging himself on Shelley. (See p. 889.)

July 2, 1820.

I have later news of my Neapolitan. I have taken every possible precaution for her, and hope that they will succeed. She is to come to us as soon as she recovers.

[Undated.]

My Neapolitan charge is dead. It seems as if the destruction that is consuming me were as an atmosphere which wrapt and *infected* everything connected with me. The rascal Paolo has been taking advantage of my situation at Naples in December, 1818, to attempt to extort money by threatening to charge me with the most horrible crimes. He is connected with some English here, who hate me with a fervour that almost does credit to their phlegmatic brains, and listen to and vent the most prodigious falsehoods. "An ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten this dunghill of a world."<sup>1</sup>

### 372. TO MARIA GISBORNE

(London)

[CASA RICCI], LEGHORN,<sup>2</sup>

July 1, 1820.

The spider spreads her webs, whether she be  
In poet's tower, cellar, or barn, or tree ;  
The silkworm in the dark green mulberry leaves  
His winding sheet and cradle ever weaves ;  
So I, a thing whom moralists call worm,  
Sit spinning still round this decaying form,  
From the fine threads of rare and subtle thought—  
No net of words in garish colours wrought  
To catch the idle buzzers of the day—

<sup>1</sup> "Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary, to sweeten my imagination."—"Lear," Act IV, Sc. vi.

<sup>2</sup> The Shelleys went to Leghorn towards the end of June, 1820 (partly in order to be near the attorney Del Rosso), and took possession of Casa Ricci, the house of the Gisbornes, who were absent in England. This letter was written in Henry Reveley's workshop, which Shelley used as a study.

But a soft cell, where when that fades away,  
Memory may clothe in wings my living name  
And feed it with the asphodels of fame,  
Which in those hearts which most remember me  
Grow, making love an immortality.

Whoever should behold me now, I wist,  
Would think I were a mighty mechanist,  
Bent with sublime Archimedean art  
To breathe a soul into the iron heart  
Of some machine portentous, or strange gin,  
Which by the force of figured spells might win  
Its way over the sea, and sport therein ;  
For round the walls are hung dread engines, such  
As Vulcan never wrought for Jove to clutch  
Ixion or the Titan :—or the quick  
Wit of that man of God, St. Dominic,  
To convince Atheist, Turk, or Heretic,  
Or those in philanthropic councils met,  
Who thought to pay some interest for the debt  
They owed to Jesus Christ for their salvation,  
By giving a faint foretaste of damnation  
To Shakespeare, Sidney, Spenser and the rest  
Who made our land an island of the blest,  
When lamp-like Spain, who now relumes her fire  
On Freedom's hearth, grew dim with Empire :—  
With thumbscrews, wheels, with tooth and spike and jag  
Which fishers found under the utmost crag  
Of Cornwall and the storm-encompass'd isles,  
Where to the sky the rude sea rarely smiles  
Unless in treacherous wrath, as on the morn  
When the exulting elements in scorn,  
Satiated with destroy'd destruction, lay  
Sleeping in beauty on their mangled prey,  
As panthers sleep ;—and other strange and dread  
Magical forms the brick floor overspread,—  
Proteus transform'd to metal did not make

More figures, or more strange ; nor did he take  
Such shapes of unintelligible brass,  
Or heap himself in such a horrid mass  
Of tin and iron not to be understood ;  
And forms of unimaginable wood,  
To puzzle Tubal Cain and all his brood :  
Great screws, and cones, and wheels, and groovèd blocks,  
The elements of what will stand the shocks  
Of wave and wind and time.—Upon the table  
More knacks and quips there be than I am able  
To catalogize in this verse of mine :—  
A pretty bowl of wood—not full of wine,  
But quicksilver ; that dew which the gnomes drink  
When at their subterranean toil they swink,  
Pledging the demons of the earthquake, who  
Reply to them in lava—cry, halloo !  
And call out to the cities o'er their head,—  
Roofs, towers, and shrines, the dying and the dead,  
Crash through the chinks of earth—and then all quail  
Another rouse, and hold their sides and laugh.  
This quicksilver no gnome has drunk—within  
The walnut bowl it lies, veined and thin,  
In colour like the wake of light that stains  
The Tuscan deep, when from the moist moon rains  
The inmost shower of its white fire—the breeze  
Is still—blue heaven smiles over the pale seas.  
And in this bowl of quicksilver—for I  
Yield to the impulse of an infancy  
Outlasting manhood—I have made to float  
A rude idealism of a paper boat :—<sup>1</sup>  
A hollow screw with cogs—Henry will know<sup>2</sup>  
The thing I mean and laugh at me,—if so  
He fears not I should do more mischief.—Next  
Lie bills and calculations much perplexed,

<sup>1</sup> An allusion to Shelley's early passion for sailing paper-boats.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Reveley.

With steamboats, frigates, and machinery quaint  
Traced over them in blue and yellow paint,  
Then comes a range of mathematical  
Instruments, for plans nautical and statical,  
A heap of rosin, a queer broken glass  
With ink in it ;—a china cup that was  
What it will never be again, I think,  
A thing from which sweet lips were wont to drink  
The liquor doctors rail at—and which I  
Will quaff in spite of them—and when we die  
We'll toss up who died first of drinking tea,  
And cry out,—heads or tails ? where'er we be.  
Near that a dusty paint box, some odd hooks,  
A half-burnt match, an ivory block, three books,  
Where conic sections, spherics, logarithms,  
To great Laplace, from Saunderson and Sims,  
Lie heap'd in their harmonious disarray  
Of figures,—disentangle them who may.  
Baron de Tott's Memoirs<sup>1</sup> beside them lie,  
And some odd volumes of old chemistry.  
Near these a most inexplicable thing,  
With lead in the middle—I'm conjecturing  
How to make Henry understand ; but no,—  
I'll leave, as Spenser says, with many mo,  
This secret in the pregnant womb of time,  
Too vast a matter for so weak a rhyme.

And here like some weird Archimage sit I,  
Plotting dark spells, and devilish enginery,  
The self-impelling steam-wheels of the mind  
Which pump up oaths from clergymen, and grind  
The gentle spirit of our meek reviews  
Into a powdery foam of salt abuse,  
Ruffling the ocean of their self-content ;—

<sup>1</sup> Baron François De Tott (1733-1793), a French soldier of Hungarian extraction, whose "*Mémoires sur les Turcs et les Tartares*," 4 vols., were published in 1784.

I sit—and smile or sigh as is my bent,  
But not for them—Libeccio rushes round  
With an inconstant and an idle sound,  
I heed him more than them—the thunder-smoke  
Is gathering on the mountains, like a cloak  
Folded athwart their shoulders broad and bare ;  
The ripe corn under the undulating air  
Undulates like an ocean ;—and the vines  
Are trembling wide in all their trellised lines—  
The murmur of the awakening sea doth fill  
The empty pauses of the blast ;—the hill  
Looks hoary through the white electric rain,  
And from the glens beyond, in sullen strain,  
The interrupted thunder howls ; above  
One chasm of heaven smiles, like the eye of Love  
On the unquiet world ;—while such things are,  
How could one worth your friendship heed the war  
Of worms ? the shriek of the world's carrion jays,  
Their censure, or their wonder, or their praise ?

You are not here ! the quaint witch Memory sees  
In vacant chairs, your absent images,  
And points where once you sat, and now should be  
But are not.—I demand if ever we  
Shall meet as then we met ;—and she replies,  
Veiling in awe her second-sighted eyes :  
" I know the past alone—but summon home  
" My sister Hope,—she speaks of all to come."  
But I, an old diviner, who knew well  
Every false verse of that sweet oracle,  
Turn'd to the sad enchantress once again,  
And sought a respite from my gentle pain,  
In citing every passage o'er and o'er  
Of our communion—how on the sea shore  
We watched the ocean and the sky together,  
Under the roof of blue Italian weather ;  
How I ran home through last year's thunder-storm,

And felt the transverse lightning linger warm  
Upon my cheek—and how we often made  
Feasts for each other, where goodwill outweigh'd  
The frugal luxury of our country cheer,  
As it well might, were it less firm and clear  
Than ours must ever be ;—and how we spun  
A shroud of talk to hide us from the sun  
Of this familiar life, which seems to be  
But is not,—or is but quaint mockery  
Of all we would believe, and sadly blame  
The jarring and inexplicable frame  
Of this wrong world ;—and then anatomize  
The purposes and thoughts of men whose eyes  
Were closed in distant years ;—or widely guess  
The issue of the earth's great business,  
When we shall be as we no longer are—  
Like babbling gossips safe, who hear the war  
Of winds, and sigh, but tremble not ;—or how  
You listen'd to some interrupted flow  
Of visionary rhyme,—in joy and pain  
Struck from the inmost fountains of my brain,  
With little skill perhaps ;—or how we sought  
Those deepest wells of passion or of thought  
Wrought by wise poets in the waste of years,  
Staining their sacred waters with our tears ;  
Quenching a thirst ever to be renew'd !  
Or how I, wisest lady ! then indued  
The language of a land which now is free,  
And wing'd with thoughts of truth and majesty,  
Flits round the tyrant's sceptre like a cloud,  
And bursts the peopled prisons, and cries aloud,  
“ My name is Legion ! ”—that majestic tongue  
Which Calderon over the desert flung  
Of ages and of nations ; and which found  
An echo in our hearts, and with the sound  
Startled oblivion ;—thou wert then to me  
As is a nurse—when inarticulately

A child would talk as its grown parents do.  
If living winds the rapid clouds pursue,  
If hawks chase doves through the æthærial way,  
Huntsmen the innocent deer, and beasts their prey,  
Why should not we rouse with the spirit's blast  
Out of the forest of the pathless past  
These recollected pleasures ?

You are now

In London, that great sea, whose ebb and flow  
At once is deaf and loud, and on the shore  
Vomits its wrecks, and still howls on for more.  
Yet in its depth what treasures ! You will see  
That which was Godwin,—greater none than he ;  
Though fallen—and fallen on evil times—to stand,  
Among the spirits of our age and land,  
Before the dread tribunal of *to come*  
The foremost—while Rebuke cowers pale and dumb.  
You will see Coleridge—he who sits obscure  
In the exceeding lustre, and the pure,  
Intense irradiation of a mind,  
Which, with its own internal lightning blind,  
Flags wearily through darkness and despair—  
A cloud-encircled meteor of the air,  
A hooded eagle among blinking owls.—  
You will see Hunt—one of those happy souls  
Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom  
This world would smell like what it is—a tomb ;  
Who is what others seem ; his room no doubt  
Is still adorn'd by many a cast from Shout,  
With graceful flowers tastefully placed about ;  
And coronals of bay from ribbons hung,  
And brighter wreaths in neat disorder flung ;  
The gifts of the most learn'd among some dozens  
Of female friends, sisters-in-law and cousins.  
And there is he with his eternal puns,  
Which beat the dullest brain for smiles, like duns



Thundering for money at a poet's door ;  
Alas ! it is no use to say, " I'm poor ! "  
Or oft in graver mood, when he will look  
Things wiser than were ever read in book,  
Except in Shakespeare's wisest tenderness.—  
You will see Hogg,—and I cannot express  
His virtues,—though I know that they are great,  
Because he locks, then barricades, the gate  
Within which they inhabit ;—of his wit  
And wisdom, you'll cry out when you are bit.  
He is a pearl within an oyster shell,  
One of the richest of the deep ;—and there  
Is English Peacock with his mountain fair  
Turned into a Flamingo ;—that shy bird  
That gleams i' the Indian air—have you not heard  
When a man marries, dies, or turns Hindoo,  
His best friends hear no more of him ?—but you  
Will see him, and will like him too, I hope,  
With the milk-white Snowdonian Antelope<sup>1</sup>  
Match'd with this cameleopard—his fine wit  
Makes such a wound, the knife is lost in it ;  
A strain too learnèd for a shallow age,  
Too wise for selfish bigots ; let his page  
Which charms the chosen spirits of the time,  
Fold itself up for the serener clime  
Of years to come, and find its recompense  
In that just expectation.—Wit and sense,  
Virtue and human knowledge ; all that might  
Make this dull world a business of delight,  
Are all combined in Horace Smith.—And these  
With some exceptions, which I need not tease  
Your patience by descanting on, are all  
You and I know in London.

I recall  
My thoughts, and bid you look upon the night.

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<sup>1</sup> The wife of Thomas Love Peacock, a lady of Welsh birth.

As water does a sponge, so the moonlight  
Fills the void, hollow, universal air—  
What see you ?—unpavilion'd heaven is fair  
Whether the moon, into her chamber gone,  
Leaves midnight to the golden stars, or wan  
Climbs with diminish'd beams the azure steep ;  
Or whether clouds sail o'er the inverse deep,  
Piloted by the many wandering blast,  
And the rare stars rush through them, dim and fast :—  
All this is beautiful in every land.—  
But what see you beside ?—a shabby stand  
Of Hackney coaches—a brick house or wall  
Fencing some lonely court, white with the scrawl  
Of our unhappy politics ;—or worse—  
A wretched woman reeling by, whose curse  
Mix'd with the watchman's, partner of her trade,  
You must accept in place of serenade—  
Or yellow-haired Pollonia murmuring  
To Henry, some unutterable thing.  
I see a chaos of green leaves and fruit  
Built round dark caverns, even to the root  
Of the living stems who feed them—in whose bowers  
There sleep in their dark dew the folded flowers ;  
Beyond, the surface of the unsickled corn  
Trembles not in the slumbering air, and borne  
In circles quaint, and ever changing dance,  
Like winged stars the fire-flies flash and glance,  
Pale in the open moonshine, but each one  
Under the dark trees seems a little sun,  
A meteor tamed ; a fix'd star gone astray  
From the silver regions of the milky way ;—  
Afar the Contadino's song is heard,  
Rude, but made sweet by distance—and a bird  
Which cannot be a Nightingale, and yet  
I know none else that sings so sweet as it  
At this late hour ;—and then all is still—  
Now Italy or London, which you will !

Next winter you must pass with me ; I'll have  
My house by that time turned into a grave  
Of dead despondence and low-thoughted care,  
And all the dreams which our tormentors are.  
Oh that Hunt, Hogg, Peacock, and Smith were  
there,

With every thing belonging to them fair !—  
We will have books, Spanish, Italian, Greek,  
And ask one week to make another week  
As like his father, as I'm unlike mine.  
Which is not his fault, as you may divine.  
Though we eat little flesh and drink no wine,  
Yet let's be merry : we'll have tea and toast ;  
Custards for supper, and an endless host  
Of syllabubs and jellies and mince-pies,  
And other such lady-like luxuries,—  
Feasting on which we will philosophize !  
And we'll have fires out of the Grand Duke's  
wood,

To thaw the six weeks' winter in our blood.  
And then we'll talk ;—what shall we talk about ?  
Oh ! there are themes enough for many a bout  
Of thought-entangled descant ;—as to nerves—  
With cones and parallelograms and curves  
I've sworn to strangle them if once they dare  
To bother me—when you are with me there.  
And they shall never more sip laudanum  
From Helicon or Himeros ; <sup>1</sup>—well, come,  
And in despite of God and of the devil,  
We'll make our friendly philosophic revel  
Outlast the leafless time ; till buds and flowers  
Warn the obscure inevitable hours,  
Sweet meeting by sad parting to renew ;—  
“ To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.”

<sup>1</sup> *Ἰμῆρος*, from which the river Himera was named, is, with some slight shade of difference, a synonym of Love.

## 373. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

LEGHORN,

July 12, 1820.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I remember you said that when Auber married you were afraid you would see or hear but little of him. "There are two voices," says Wordsworth, "one of the mountains and one of the sea, both a mighty voice." So you have two wives—one of the mountains, all of whose claims I perfectly admit, whose displeasure I deprecate, and from whom I feel assured that I have nothing to fear: the other of the sea, the India House, who perhaps, makes you write so much, that I suppose you have not a scrawl to spare. I make bold to write to you on the news that you are correcting my "Prometheus," for which I return thanks, and I send some things which may be added. I hear of you from Mr. Gisborne, but from you I do not hear. Well, how go the funds and the romance? <sup>1</sup> Cobbet[t]'s euthanasia seems approaching, and I suppose you will have some rough festivals at the apotheosis of the Debt.

Nothing, I think, shows the generous gullibility of the English nation more than their having adopted her Sacred Majesty as the heroine of the day, in spite of all their prejudices and bigotry. I, for my part, of course wish no harm to happen to her, even if she has, as I firmly believe, amused herself in a manner rather indecorous with any courier or baron. But I cannot help adverting to it as one of the absurdities of royalty, that a vulgar woman, with all those low tastes which prejudice considers as vices, and a person whose habits and manners everyone would shun in private life, without any redeeming virtues should be turned into a heroine, because she is a queen, or, as a collateral reason, because her husband is a king; and he, no less than his ministers, are so odious that everything,

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<sup>1</sup> Evidently "Maid Marian," which Peacock had completed, with the exception of the last chapter, by the beginning of 1819. The story was published in 1822.

however disgusting, which is opposed to them, is admirable. The Paris paper, which I take in, copied some excellent remarks from the *Examiner* about it.<sup>1</sup>

We are just now occupying the Gisbornes' house at Leghorn, and I have turned Mr. Reveley's workshop into my study. The Libecchio here howls like a chorus of fiends all day, and the weather is just pleasant,—not at all hot, the days being very misty, and the nights divinely serene. I have been reading with much pleasure the Greek romances. The best of them is the pastoral of Longus : but they are all very entertaining, and would be delightful if they were less rhetorical and ornate. I am translating in *ottava rima* the "Hymn to Mercury" of Homer. Of course my stanza precludes a literal translation. My next effort will be, that it should be legible—a quality much to be desired in translations.

I am told that the magazines, etc., blaspheme me at a great rate. I wonder why I write verses, for nobody reads them. It is a kind of disorder, for which the regular practitioners prescribe what is called a torrent of abuse ; but I fear that can hardly be considered as a specific. Beck and English have written to me again and I have asked Hogg to get some attorney in Town to negotiate with them.

I enclose two additional poems, to be added to those printed at the end of "Prometheus" : and I send them to you, for fear Ollier might not know what to do in case he objected to some expressions in the fifteenth and sixteenth stanzas ;<sup>2</sup> and that you would do me the favour to insert an asterisk or asterisks, with as little expense of the sense as may be. The other poem I send to you, not to make two letters. I want Jones's "Greek Grammar" very much for Mary, who is deep in Greek. I thought of sending for it

<sup>1</sup> Queen Caroline's return to England on June 6, 1820, to meet the charges against her character, had been attended with an extraordinary demonstration from the public.

<sup>2</sup> "These were the 15th and 16th stanzas of the 'Ode to Liberty.'"—Peacock's note.

in sheets by the post ; but as I find it would cost as much as a parcel, I would rather have a parcel, including it and some other books, which you would do me a great favour by sending by the FIRST SHIP. Never send us more reviews than *two* back on any of Lord Byron's works, as we get them here. Ask Ollier and Mr. Gisborne,—Hunt whether they have anything to send.—Believe me, my dear Peacock,

Sincerely and affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

Jones's "Greek Grammar"; Schrevelii "Lexicon"; the "Greek Exercises"; "Melincourt," and "H[eadlong] Hall"; papers, and "Indicators" and whatever else you may think interesting. Godwin's "Answer to Malthus," if out. Six copies of the 2nd edit. of "Cenci."

XVIII. PISA. THE BATHS OF SAN GIULIANO  
"EPIPSYCHIDION," "ADONAIS"

July 20, 1820—July 19, 1821

"CHARLES the First"—Mrs. Mason—The Neapolitan Rising—A Letter to John Keats—Godwin's Affairs—Robert Southey and the *Quarterly* Article—Allegra and Byron—Clare Clairmont at Florence—Letter to the *Quarterly Review*—Pacchiani—Keats's Poetry—Barry Cornwall's Verses—The Flood at the Baths—Emilia Viviani—The "Epipsychidion"—Sgricci the Improvisatore—"A Defence of Poetry"—Prince Mavrocordato—Dr. Hume—A Boat Accident—"Adonais"—"Queen Mab" Pirated.

374. TO THOMAS MEDWIN  
(Milan (re-addressed to Geneva))

Pisa,

July 20, 1820.

MY DEAR MEDWIN,

I wrote to you a day or two ago at Geneva. I have since received your letter from the mountains. How much I envy you, or rather how much I sympathise in the delights of your wandering. I have a passion for such expeditions, although partly the capriciousness of my health, and partly the want of the incitement of a companion, keep me at home. I see the mountains, the sky, and the trees from my windows, and recollect, as an old man does the mistress of his youth, the raptures of a more familiar intercourse; but without his regrets, for their forms are yet living in my mind.

I hope you will not pass Tuscany, leaving your promised visit unpaid. I leave it to you to make the project of taking up your abode with such an animal of the other world as I am, agreeable to your friend; but Mrs. Shelley unites with me in assuring both yourself and him, that whatever else may be found deficient, a sincere welcome is at least in waiting for you.

I am delighted with your approbation of my "Cenci," and am encouraged to wish to present you with "Prometheus Unbound," a drama also, but a composition of a totally different character. I do not know if it be wise to affect variety in compositions, or whether the attempt to excel in many ways does not debar from excellence in one particular kind. "Prometheus Unbound," is in the merest spirit of ideal Poetry, and not, as the name would indicate, a mere imitation of the Greek drama, or indeed if I have been successful, is it an imitation of anything. But you will judge—I hear it is just printed, and I probably shall receive copies from England before I see you. Your objections to "The Cenci" as to the introduction of the name of God is good, inasmuch as the play is addressed to a Protestant people; but *we* Catholics speak eternally and familiarly of the first person of the Trinity; and amongst *us* religion is more interwoven with, and is less extraneous to, the system of ordinary life. As to Cenci's curse—I know not whether I can defend it or no. I wish I may be able, since, as it often happens respecting the worst part of an author's work, it is a particular favourite with me. I prided myself as since your approbation I hope that I had just cause to do, upon the two concluding lines of the play. I confess I cannot approve of the squeamishness which excludes the exhibition of such *subjects* from the scene (a squeamishness the produce, as I firmly believe, of a *lower tone* of the *public mind*, and foreign to the *majestic and confident wisdom* of the golden age of our country).<sup>1</sup> What think you of my boldness? I mean to write a play, in the spirit of human nature, without prejudice or passion, entitled "Charles the First."<sup>2</sup> So vanity intoxicates people; but let those few who praise my verses,

<sup>1</sup> This sentence in brackets, was printed by Trelawny without comment. Mr. William Brown of Edinburgh, who has kindly compared Trelawny's copy with the original in his possession, states that it was scored out, presumably, by Shelley, and that the words in italics are indecipherable to him.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley only wrote a few scenes of this play.



and in whose approbation I take so much delight, answer for the sin.

I wonder what in the world the Queen has done. I should not wonder, after the whispers I have heard, to find that the Green Bag contained evidence that she had imitated Pasiphæe, and that the Committee should recommend to Parliament a bill to exclude all Minotaurs from the succession. What silly stuff is this to employ a great nation about. I wish the King and the Queen, like Punch and his wife, would fight out their disputes in person.

What is very strange I can in no manner discover your parcels—I never knew anything more unfortunate. Klieber sends me your letters regularly (which, by-the-bye, I wish in future you would direct to Pisa, as I have no money business now in Florence), but he has heard of no parcel or book.

This warm weather agrees excellently with me; I only wish it would last all the year. Many things both to say and to hear be referred until we meet.

Your affectionate friend,

P. B. S.

375. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY  
(Leghorn)

CASA SILVA [PISA].

SUNDAY MORN[ING], July 23, 1820.<sup>1</sup>

MY DEAR LOVE,

I believe I shall have taken a very pleasant and spacious

<sup>1</sup> The date of this letter was originally given as July 20, 1821, but Mr. Forman has shown that there is every reason for supposing it was written on the above date. Casa Silva, at Pisa, was the residence of Lady Mountcashell, a daughter of Lord Kingston and a former pupil of Mary Wollstonecraft. She had been for some years separated from the Earl Mountcashell, and was living as the wife of Mr. George William Tighe, a cousin of the authoress of "Psyche." Lady Mountcashell and Mr. Tighe were known as Mr. and Mrs. Mason. Her liking for the Shelleys may have been prompted by a desire to be of service to the daughter of Mary Wollstonecraft.

apartment at the Bagni for three months. It is as all the others are—dear. I shall give forty or forty-five sequins for the three months, but as yet I do not know which. I could get others something cheaper, and a great deal worse ; but if we would write, it is requisite to have space.

To-morrow evening, or the following morning, you will probably see me. Mr. T[ighe] is planning a journey to England to secure his property in the event of a revolution, which, he is persuaded, is on the eve of exploding. I neither believe that, nor do I fear that the consequences will be so immediately destructive to the existing forms of social order. Money will be delayed, and the exchange reduced very low, and my annuity and Mrs. M[ason]'s, on account of these being *money*, will be in some danger ; but land is quite safe. Besides, it will not be so rapid. Let us hope we shall have a reform. Mr. T[ighe] will be lulled into security, while the slow progress of things is still flowing on, after this affair of the Queen<sup>1</sup> may appear to be blown over. There is bad news from Palermo : the soldiers resisted the people, and a terrible slaughter, amounting, it is said, to four thousand men, ensued. The event, however, was as it should be. Sicily, like Naples, is free. By the brief and partial accounts of the Florence paper, it appears that the enthusiasm of the people was prodigious, and that the women fought from the houses, raining down boiling oil on the assailants.

I am promised a bill on Vienna on the 5th, the day on which my note will be paid, and the day on which I propose to leave Leghorn. Mrs. M[ason] is very unhappy at the idea of T[ighe]'s going to England, though she seems to feel the necessity of it. Some time or other he must go to settle his affairs, and they seem to agree that this is the best opportunity. I have no thought of leaving Italy. The best thing we can do is to save money, and, if things take a decided turn (which I am convinced they will at

last, but not perhaps for two or three years,) it will be time for me to assert my rights, and preserve my annuity. Meanwhile, another event may decide us. Kiss sweet babe, and kiss yourself for me—I love you affectionately.

P. B. S.

Sunday Evening.

I have taken the house<sup>1</sup> for forty sequins for three months—a good bargain, and a very good house as things go—this is about thirteen sequins a-month. To-morrow I go to look over the inventory; expect me, therefore on Tuesday morning.

376. TO JOHN KEATS

(Hampstead)

PISA,

27 July, 1820.

MY DEAR KEATS,

I hear with great pain the dangerous accident that you have undergone, and Mr. Gisborne who gives me the account of it, adds that you continue to wear a consumptive appearance. This consumption is a disease particularly fond of people who write such good verses as you have done, and with the assistance of an English winter it can often

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Shelley says that they "spent the summer [of 1820] at the Baths of San Giuliano, four miles from Pisa. These Baths were of great use to Shelley in soothing his nervous irritability. During some of the hottest days of August, Shelley made a solitary journey on foot to the summit of Monte San Pelegrino—a mountain of some height, on the top of which there is a chapel, the object, during certain days of the year of many pilgrimages. The excursion delighted him while it lasted, though he exerted himself too much, and the effect was considerable lassitude and weakness on his return. During the expedition he conceived the idea and wrote in the three days immediately succeeding to his return, "The Witch of Atlas." The Shelleys arrived at the house Casa Prinni, which they had taken at the Baths for three months, on August 5, 1820.

indulge its selection ;—I do not think that young and amiable poets are at all bound to gratify its taste ; they have entered into no bond with the Muses to that effect. But seriously (for I am joking on what I am very anxious about) I think you would do well to pass the winter after so tremendous an accident, in Italy, and if you think it as necessary as I do so long as you could [find] Pisa or its neighbourhood agreeable to you, Mrs. Shelley unites with myself in urging the request, that you would take up your residence with us. You might come by sea to Leghorn (France is not worth seeing, and the sea is particularly good for weak lungs), which is within a few miles of us. You ought at all events, to see Italy, and your health, which I suggest as a motive, might be an excuse to you. I spare declamation about the statues, and the paintings, and the ruins—and what is a greater piece of forbearance—about the mountains streams and the fields, the colours of the sky, and the sky itself.

I have lately read your “Endymion” again and ever with a new sense of the treasures of poetry it contains, though treasures poured forth with indistinct profusion. This, people in general will not endure, and that is the cause of the comparatively few copies which have been sold. I feel persuaded that you are capable of the greatest things, so you but will.

I always tell Ollier to send you copies of my books.—“Prometheus Unbound” I imagine you will receive nearly at the same time with this letter. “The Cenci” I hope you have already received—it was studiously composed in a different style

“Below the *good* how far ? but far above the *great*.”

In poetry I have sought to avoid system and mannerism ; I wish those who excel me in genius would pursue the same plan.

Whether you remain in England, or journey to Italy,—believe that you carry with you my anxious wishes for your

health, happiness and success wherever you are, or whatever you undertake, and that I am, yours sincerely,

[Addressed outside].

P. B. SHELLEY.<sup>1</sup>

JOHN KEATS, Esq.,  
(to the care of Leigh Hunt, Esq.),  
Examiner Office, Catharine Street, Strand, London.  
Angleterre.

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<sup>1</sup> Keats sent the following reply to this letter—

HAMPSTEAD, August, 1820.

MY DEAR SHELLEY,

I am very much gratified that you, in a foreign country, and with a mind almost over-occupied, should write to me in the strain of the letter beside me. If I do not take advantage of your invitation, it will be prevented by a circumstance I have very much to heart to prophesy. There is no doubt that an English winter would put an end to me, and do so in a lingering hateful manner. Therefore, I must either voyage or journey to Italy, as a soldier marches up to a battery. My nerves at present are the worst part of me, yet they feel soothed that, come what extreme may, I shall not be destined to remain in one spot long enough to take a hatred of any four particular bedposts. I am glad you take any pleasure in my poor poem, which I would willingly take the trouble to unwrite, if possible, did I care so much as I have done about reputation. I received a copy of "The Cenci," as from yourself, from Hunt. There is only one part of it I am judge of—the poetry and dramatic effect, which by many spirits nowadays is considered the Mammon. A modern work, it is said, must have a purpose, which may be the God. An artist must serve Mammon; he must have "self-concentration"—selfishness, perhaps. You, I am sure, will forgive me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity, and be more of an artist, and load every rift of your subject with ore. The thought of such discipline must fall like cold chains upon you, who perhaps never sat with your wings furled for six months together. And is this not extraordinary talk for the writer of "Endymion," whose mind was like a pack of scattered cards? I am picked up and sorted to a pip. My imagination is a monastery, and I am its monk. I am in expectation of "Prometheus" every day. Could I have my own wish effected, you would have it still in manuscript, or be now putting an end to the second act. I remember you advising me not to publish my first blights on Hampstead Heath. I am returning advice upon your hands. Most of the poems in the volume I send you,<sup>(4)</sup> have been written above two years, and would never have been published but for hope of gain; so you see I am inclined enough to take your advice now. I must express once more my deep sense of your kindness, adding my sincere thanks and respects for Mrs. Shelley. In the hope of soon seeing you,

I remain most sincerely yours, JOHN KEATS.

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(4) "Lamia," "Isabella," etc., 1820.

## 377. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

PISA,

August 7, 1820.

SIR,

The purport of this letter is to inform you that I cannot comply with the request contained in yours dated July 21st, and that you ought not to depend on me for any further pecuniary assistance at the present moment.—My affairs are in a state of the most complicated embarrassment: added to which I am surrounded by circumstances in which any diminution of my very limited resources might involve me in personal peril. I fear that you and I are not on such terms as to justify me in exposing to you the actual state of my delicate and emergent situation which the most sacred considerations imperiously require me to conceal from Mary; be it sufficient, without entering into the subject now present to my mind, to state the question in such a manner that any entire stranger who should chance to peruse this letter might without reference to these circumstances perceive that I am justified in withholding my assent to your request. I *cannot* comply, but it will be an additional consolation to me to have shown that I ought not.

I have given you within a few years the amount of a considerable fortune, and have destituted myself for the purpose of realising it of nearly four times the amount. Except for the *goodwill* which this transaction seems to have produced between you and me, this money, for any advantage it ever conferred on you, might as well have been thrown into the seas. Had I kept in my own hands this £4,000 or £5,000 and administered it in trust for your permanent advantage, I should have been indeed your benefactor. The error, however, was greater in the man of mature age, extensive experience, and penetrating intellect than in the crude and impetuous boy. Such an error is seldom committed twice.

You tell me that I promised to give you £500 out of my

income of the present year. Never, certainly. How is it possible that you should assert such a mistake? I might have said I could, or that I would if I thought it necessary. I might have been so foolish as to say this, but I must have been mad to have promised what you allege. Thus much at once on the subject of promises. I never but in one instance promised anything unconditionally. And the conditions were, first, that I should be able to perform my engagement; and, secondly, that the great sacrifices at which alone it could ever be performed by me should be made available to some adequate and decisive advantage to result to you; such for instance as the compromise of the suit now pending. Had Mr. Gisborne advanced the money, according to the terms proposed by me, its application to this purpose alone would have been secured.

In October, 1819, you wrote to say that the verdict of a jury had been obtained against you for something between £600 and £2,000; and that if you had £500 you believed that you could compromise the claim founded upon that verdict. My first impulse was—that I would do everything I could to serve you; as much as that I certainly expressed under a belief of the emergency of your situation. But in fact I could do nothing. A year passes over, and after the decision in a court of common law, the affair remains stationary. Nothing is more unlikely than that, if your opponents can show a legal claim to this ever-increasing sum, they will compromise that claim for a fourth of the whole amount which has accrued. Nothing is more absurd than to pay the sum in question, if they cannot show this legal claim, with a reserve of a liability for the entire sum to those claimants in whose favour the property may be finally adjudged. The affair seems to me a mass of improbabilities and absurdities. You still urge the request of £500. You would take anything in the shape of it that would compel me to make the great sacrifices (if indeed now it be not impossible) of paying it from my pocket—without—you must allow me to say—a due regard

to the proportion borne by your accommodation to my immediate loss or even your own ultimate advantage. If you had bills on my income for the sum how would you procure money on them? My credit, except among those friends from whom I never will ask a pecuniary favour, certainly would not suffice to raise it, and your own name is worth as little or less in the money market. That my bills would tell for something, I do not doubt. And when you had procured this money—this £400—what would be done with it? What is become of the £100 already advanced by Horace Smith? Put your hand upon your heart and tell me where it is. In a letter written *after* your receipt of this sum you state with the most circumlocutory force of expression, and as if you were anxious to leave yourself no outlet for escape, that you have never received a single farthing. This, of course, was only meant for immediate effect, and not for the purpose of ultimately leading into error, and is only a part of that system you pursue of sacrificing all interests to the present one. Suppose after this I were to involve myself in the chance of destruction, to defraud my creditors of what is justly theirs, to withhold their due from those to whom I am the only source of happiness and misery, and send you those bills. The weakness and wickedness of my conduct would admit of some palliation if the money they produced were reserved for the attempt at compromise and re-transmitted to me the moment that attempt, as it must, should fail. Sir Philip Sidney, when dying, and consumed with thirst, gave the helmet of water which was brought to him to the wounded soldier who stood beside him. It would not have been generosity but folly had he poured it on the ground, as you would that I should the wrecks of my once prosperous fortune.

So much for the benefit which you would derive from my concession of your request. The evils—exclusive of that circumstance which makes concession absolutely impossible—were to me immense. I have creditors whose claims



amount nearly to £2,000: some of whom are exceedingly importunate; others suffering perhaps more than you suffer, from the delays which my impoverished condition and limited income have compelled me to assign, others threatening to institute a legal process against me, which, not to speak of the ruinous expense connected with it, would expose my name to an obloquy from which you must excuse me if I endeavour to preserve it. Amongst these creditors is the annuitant from whom I procured money to meet Hogan's claim on you, at 25 per cent., and the interest on which you pledged yourself, but have neglected, to pay. To all, or any one of these objects the excess of my income over my expenditure is most justly due.

In case any such reverse as bankruptcy happening to yourself, a circumstance which sometimes surprises the most prosperous concern, and infinitely probable in an embarrassed business conducted by a person wholly ignorant of trade, how would you regret my folly in not having been now severely just?

If you are sincere with me on this subject, why instead of seeking to plunge one person already half ruined for your sake into deeper ruin, do you not procure the £400 by your own active powers? A person of your extraordinary accomplishments might easily obtain from the booksellers for the promise of a novel, a sum exceeding this amount. Your answer to Malthus would sell at least for £400. Half the care and thought bestowed upon this honourable exertion of the highest faculties of our nature would have rewarded you more largely than dependence on a person whose precarious situation and ruined fortunes make dependence a curse to both.

Mary is now giving suck to her infant, in whose life, after the frightful events of the last two years, her own seems wholly to be bound up. Your letters from their style and spirit (such is your erroneous notion of taste) never fail to produce an appalling effect on her frame. On one occasion agitation of mind produced through her a disorder

in the child, similar to that which destroyed our little girl two years ago. The disorder was prolonged by the alarm which it occasioned, until by the utmost efforts of medical skill and care it was restored to health. On that occasion Mary at my request authorised me to intercept such letters or information as I might judge likely to disturb her mind. That discretion I have exercised with the letter to which this is a reply. The correspondence, therefore, rests between you and me, if you should consider any further discussion of a similar nature with that in which you have lately been engaged with Mary necessary after the full explanation which I have given of my views, and the unalterable decision which I have pronounced. Nor must the correspondence with your daughter on a similar subject be renewed. It was even wholly improper and might lead to serious imputations against both herself and you, which it is important for her honour as well as for yours that I should not only repel but prevent. She has not, nor ought she to have, the disposal of money; if she had, poor thing, she would give it all to you.

Such a father (I mean a man of such high genius) can be at no loss to find subjects on which to address such a daughter. Do not let me be thought to dictate, but I can only convey to her such letters as are consistent with her peace to read, such as you once proposed to write, containing—

[The remainder of this letter is missing.]<sup>1</sup>

### 378. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

PISA,

August 17, 1820.

DEAR SIR,

Allow me to acknowledge the sincere pleasure which I

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<sup>1</sup> "This scurrilous letter," as Godwin described it to Mrs. Gisborne, did not close the correspondence, as the extract from a letter written a month later will show. (See No. 379.)

received from the first paragraph of your letter. The disavowal it contained was just such as I firmly anticipated.<sup>1</sup>

Allow me also to assure you that no menace employed in my letter could have the remotest application to yourself. I am not indeed aware that it contained any menace. I recollect expressing what contempt I felt, in the hope that you might meet the wretched hireling, who has so closely imitated your style as to deceive all but those who knew you into a belief that he was you, at Murray's or somewhere, and that you would inflict my letter on him as a recompense for sowing ill-will between those who wish each other all good, as you and I do.

I confess your recommendation to adopt the system of ideas you call Christianity has little weight with me, whether you mean the popular superstition in all its articles, or some other more refined theory with respect to those events and opinions which put an end to the graceful religion of the Greeks. To judge of the doctrines by their effects, one would think that this religion were called the religion of Christ and Charity *ut lucus a non lucendo*, when I consider the manner in which they seem to have transformed the disposition and understanding of you and men of the most amiable manners and the highest accomplishments, so that even when recommending Christianity you cannot forbear breathing out defiance, against the express words of Christ. What would you have me think? You accuse me, on what evidence I cannot guess, of *guilt*—a bold word, sir, this, and one which would have required me to write to you in another tone had you addressed it to anyone except myself. Instead, therefore, of refraining from "judging that you

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<sup>1</sup> Southey had replied to Shelley's previous letter (p. 787), "I have never in any of my writings mentioned your name, or alluded to you even in the remotest hint, either as a man or an author. Except the 'Alastor,' which you sent me, I have never read or seen any of your publications since you were at Keswick." [From the correspondence of Southey and Shelley in the appendix to "Southey's Correspondence with Caroline Bowles," edited by Professor Dowden, who has kindly allowed me to reprint Shelley's letters to Southey.]

be not judged," you not only judge but condemn, and that to a punishment which its victim must be either among the meanest or the loftiest not to regard as bitterer than death. But you are such a pure one as Jesus Christ found not in all Judea to throw the first stone against the woman taken in adultery!

With what care do the most tyrannical Courts of Judicature weigh evidence, and surround the accused with protecting forms; with what reluctance do they pronounce their cruel and presumptuous decisions compared with you! you select a single passage out of a life otherwise not only spotless, but spent in an impassioned pursuit of virtue, which looks like a blot, merely because I regulated my domestic arrangements without deferring to the notions of the vulgar, although I might have done so quite as conveniently had I descended to their base thoughts—this you call *guilt*.<sup>1</sup> I might answer you in another manner, but I take God to witness, if such a Being is now regarding both you and me, and I pledge myself if we meet, as perhaps you expect, before Him after death, to repeat the same in His presence—that you accuse me wrongfully. I am innocent of ill, either done or intended; the consequences you allude to flowed in no respect from me. If you were my friend I could tell you a history that would make you open your eyes; but I shall certainly never make the public my familiar confidant.

You say you judge of opinions by the fruits; so do I, but by their remote and permanent fruits—such fruits of rash judgment as Christianity seems to have produced in you. The immediate fruits of all new opinions are indeed calamity to the promulgators and professors; but we are the end of nothing, and it is in acting well, in contempt of present advantage, that virtue consists.

I need not to be instructed that the opinion of the ruling

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Rossetti thinks Shelley's meaning was, that while still retaining his wife, he could have set up a mistress as well.

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party, to which you have attached yourself, always exacts, contumeliously receives, and never reciprocates toleration. But "there is a tide in the affairs of men"—it is rising while we speak.

Another specimen of your Christianity is the judgment you form of the spirit of my verses from the abuse of the Reviews.<sup>1</sup> I have desired Mr. Ollier to send you those last published; they may amuse you, for one of them—indeed neither of them have anything to do with those speculations on which we differ.

I cannot hope that you will be candid enough to feel, or, if you feel, to own that you have done ill in accusing, even in your mind, an innocent and a persecuted man, whose only real offence is the holding opinions something similar to those which you once held respecting the existing state of society. Without this, further correspondence, the object for which I renewed it being once obtained, must, from the differences in our judgment, be irksome and useless. I hope some day to meet you in London, and ten minutes' conversation is worth ten folios of writing. Meanwhile assure yourself that among all your good wishers, you have none who wish you better than, dear Sir,

Your very faithful and obedient servant,

P. B. SHELLEY.

P.S.—I ought not to omit that I have had sickness enough, and that at this moment I have so severe a pain in my side that I can hardly write. All this is of no account in the favour of what you or anyone else calls Christianity; surely it would be better to wish me health and healthful

<sup>1</sup> Southey had written, "The specimens which I have happened to see in reviews and newspapers have confirmed my opinion that your powers for poetry are of a high order; but the manner in which those powers have been employed is such as to prevent me from feeling any desire to see more of productions so monstrous in their kind, and pernicious in their tendency."

sensations. I hope the chickens will not come home to roost.<sup>1</sup>

## 379. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

September, 1820.

(Fragment)

I should be sorry to have said anything that wears the appearance of a threat ; but imperious events compel one to foretell the consequences of your attempting to agitate her [Mary's] mind. I need not tell you that the neglecting entirely to write to your daughter from the moment that nothing could be gained by it would admit of but one interpretation. You may address me as usual ; . . . allow me to express the hope that you will write to me from time to time a frank account of the state of your affairs, and that you will consider my will to assist as only limited by my power.

## 380. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

(Bagni di San Giuliano)

[LEGHORN], CASA RICCI,

Sep[tember] 1, 1820.

I am afraid, my dearest, that I shall not be able to be with you so soon as to-morrow evening, though I shall use every exertion. Del Rosso I have not seen, nor shall until this evening. Jackson, I have, and he is to drink tea with us this evening, and bring the *Constitutionnel*.

You will have seen the papers, but I doubt that they will not contain the latest and most important news. It is certain, by private letters from merchants, that a serious insurrection has broken out at Paris, and the *reports* last night are, that an attack made by the populace on the Tuileries still continued when the last accounts came away. At Naples the constitutional party have declared to the Austrian minister, that if the Emperor should make war

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<sup>1</sup> In reference to the motto on the title-page of "The Curse of Kehama,"—"Curses are like young chickens, they always come home to roost."

on them, their first action would be to put to death *all* the members of the royal family—a necessary and most just measure, when the forces of the combatants, as well as the merits of their respective causes, are so unequal. That kings should be everywhere the hostages for liberty were admirable.

What will become of the Gisbornes, or of the English at Paris? How soon will England itself, and perhaps Italy, be caught by the sacred fire? And what, to come from the solar system to a grain of sand, *shall we do?*

Kiss babe for me, and your own self. I am somewhat better, but my side still vexes me—a little.

Your affectionate S

### 381. TO LORD BYRON<sup>1</sup>

(Ravenna)

PISA,

Sep[tember] 17, 1820.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,

I have no conception of what Clare's letter to you contains, and but an imperfect one of the subject of her correspondence with you at all. One or two of her letters, but not

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<sup>1</sup> "Clare had not seen Allegra since she parted from her at Este in Oct., 1818. In Jan., 1819, Mary heard from Mrs. Hoppner that the child had been entrusted by her, with Byron's consent, to a maid of her choice, and that she suffered constantly from the cold. Four months later, Clare was informed of Mrs. Vavassour's proposal to adopt and provide for Allegra—a proposal to which, involving as it did the entire surrender of his paternal authority, Byron refused to accede." (Dowden's "Shelley," II, p. 328.) Byron left Venice towards the end of the year 1819, and postponed his visit to England on account of Allegra's health. (Prothero, "Byron's Letters," IV, 389.) By Dec. 31st he had taken the child with him to the Palazzo Guiccioli at Ravenna. Not having heard any tidings of Allegra for some time, Clare sent an appeal to Byron through the Hoppners to be allowed to see her. To this appeal Byron said in a letter to Hoppner, for Clare's benefit, that he so totally disapproved of the mode of children's treatment in the Shelleys' family, that he should look upon the child as going into a hospital if he allowed them to take charge of her; and he asks "Have they reared one?" He speaks of her health as being excellent, her temper

lately, I have indeed seen ; but as I thought them extremely childish and absurd, and requested her not to send them, and she afterwards told me that she had written and sent others in place of them, I cannot tell if those which I saw on that occasion were sent to you or not. I wonder, however, at your being provoked at what Clare writes ; though that she should write what is provoking is very probable. You are conscious of performing your duty to Allegra, and your refusal to allow her to visit Clare at this distance you conceive to be part of that duty. That Clare should have wished to see her is natural. That her disappointment should vex her, and her vexation make her write absurdly, is

as not bad, and that though sometimes vain and obstinate he hoped to remedy these defects by education in England or in a convent. He adds that the child shall not quit him again "to perish of starvation, and green fruit, or be taught to believe that there is no Deity," and that Clare can always have her with her "whenever there is convenience of vicinity and access . . . otherwise no. It was so stipulated from the beginning." (Prothero's "Byron," V, 15.) The substance of these remarks was conveyed in a letter by Mrs. Hoppner which Clare describes in her journal on April 30 as "concerning green fruit and God." On May 1st she notes: "Send a letter to Madame Hoppner with a letter for Ravenna." Professor Dowden prints the following from a rough draft in Clare's handwriting which probably formed a part of this enclosure for Byron. "I beg from you the indulgence of a visit from my child, because that I am weaker every day and more miserable. I have already proved in ten thousand ways that I have so loved her as to have commanded, nay, to have destroyed, such of my feelings as would have been injurious to her welfare. You answer my request by menacing, if I do not continue to suffer in silence, that you will inflict the greatest of all evils on my child—you threaten to put her in a convent where she will be equally divided from us both. . . . This calls to my remembrance the story in the Bible, where Solomon judges between the two women ; the false parent was willing the child should be divided, but the feelings of the real one made her consent to any deprivation rather than her child should be destroyed ; so I am willing to undergo any infliction rather than her whole life should be spoiled." (Dowden's "Shelley," II, 329.) Byron's answer was addressed to Shelley, who replied on May 26, 1820, condemning its harsh tone, but admitting the wisdom of separating the mother and child. (Prothero's "Byron," V, 14.) On Aug. 25, 1820, Byron wrote declining all correspondence with Clare, consequently the office of seeking for intelligence about Allegra, and receiving it, fell upon Shelley.



all in the usual order of things. But, poor thing, she is very unhappy and in bad health, and she ought to be treated with as much indulgence as possible. The weak and the foolish are in this respect like kings ; they can do no wrong.

I think I have said enough to excuse myself for declining to be the instrument of the communication of her wishes or sentiments to you ; of course I should be always happy to convey yours to her. But at present I do not see that you need trouble yourself further than to take care that she should receive regular intelligence of Allegra's health, etc. You can write to me, or make your secretary write to her (as you do not like writing yourself), or arrange it in any manner most convenient to yourself. Of course I should be happy to hear from you on any subject.

Galignani tells us that on the 17th of August you arrived in London, and immediately drove to the Queen's house with dispatches from Italy. If your wraith indited the note which I received, he will also receive this answer. Do you take no part in the important nothings which the most powerful assembly in the world is now engaged in weighing with such ridiculous deliberation ? At least, if ministers fail in their object, shall you or not return as candidate for any part of the power they will lose ? Their successors, I hope, and you, if you will be one of them, will exert that power to other purposes than their's. As to me, I remain in Italy for the present. If you really go to England, and leave Allegra in Italy, I think you had better arrange so that Clare might see Allegra in your absence if she please. The objections now existing against a visit either to or from her, would be then suspended, and such a concession would prevent all future contention on the subject. People only desire with great eagerness that which is forbidden or withheld. Besides that, you should shew yourself above taking offence at anything she has written, which of course you are.

It would give me great pleasure to hear from you, and

to receive news of more cantos of "Don Juan," or something else. You have starved us lately.

Mrs. S. unites with me in best regards, and I remain,  
my dear Lord Byron,

Your very sincere, etc.

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

P.S.—If I were to go to the Levant or Greece, could you be of any service to me? If so, I should be very much obliged to you.

### 382. TO AMELIA CURRAN

PISA,<sup>1</sup>

Sep[tember] 17, 1820.

#### Fragment

*of a letter in which Shelley excuses himself for probably not having answered a letter; has just got into a habit of entrusting Mrs. Shelley with his correspondence.*

"believing that my friends would be quite as well pleased to hear from her as from me. . . Do you know of the absurd proceeding in England and the minute lever which has moved our moral countrymen?<sup>1</sup> My only hope is that the mistake into which the ministers have fallen will precipitate them into ruin; whoever may be their successors in power, it is impossible that they should exercise it worse." . . .

### 383. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT<sup>2</sup>

(Florence)

PISA,

October 29, 1820.

MY DEAREST CLARE,

I wrote to you a kind of a scrawl the other day merely

<sup>1</sup> The impeachment of Queen Caroline.

<sup>2</sup> Clara Clairmont, acting on the advice of Mrs. Mason, had accepted the situation of governess in the family of Professor

to show that I had not forgotten you, and as it was taxed with a postscript by Mary, it contained nothing that I wished it to contain. Mrs. Mason has just given me your letter brought by the Tantinis.<sup>1</sup> I called on the Tantinis last night, and am pained to find that they confirm the intelligence of your letter. They tell me that you looked very melancholy and disconsolate, which they imputed to the weather. You must indeed be very uncomfortable for it to become visible to them. Keep up your spirit, my best girl, until we meet at Pisa. But for Mrs. Mason, I should say, come back immediately and give up a place so inconsistent with your feelings—as it is, I fear you had better endure—at least until you come here. You know, however, whatever you shall determine on, where to find one ever affectionate Friend, to whom your absence is too painful for your return ever to be unwelcome. I think it moreover for your own interest to observe certain ——. As to introductions, believe me I will try my best. I have seen little lately of Mrs. M[ason], nor when one sees her is it easy to nail her attention to what you wish to say, unless you make a direct demand, which in the present case I can hardly do. Medwin's friends<sup>2</sup> are yet to come. I feel almost certain on their arrival of being able to get introductions of some sort or other for you from him. I have

Bojti at Florence, to which place Shelley had accompanied her on October 20. He returned two days later to the Baths, and found that Thomas Medwin, his cousin and former schoolfellow, had arrived. "It was nearly seven years since we parted," says Medwin, "but I should immediately have recognized him in a crowd. His figure was emaciated and somewhat bent, owing to near-sightedness and his being forced to lean over his books with his eyes almost touching them; his hair, still profuse and curling naturally, was partially interspersed with grey; but his appearance was youthful, and his countenance, whether grave or animated, strikingly intellectual. There was also a freshness and purity in his complexion that he never lost."—Medwin's "Life of Shelley," Vol. II, p. 2.

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Dowden says that on Oct. 28 Shelley had come to Pisa to engage lodgings.

<sup>2</sup> Captain and Mrs. Williams.

not yet spoken to him of it, but I know that he would do all in his power.

I have suffered within this last week a violent access of my disease, with a return of those spasms that I used to have. I am consoled by the persuasion that the seat of the disease is in the kidneys, and consequently not mortal. As to the pain, I care little for it ; but the nervous irritability which it leaves is a great and serious evil to me, and which, if not incessantly combated by myself and soothed by others, would leave me nothing but torment in life.— I am now much better. Medwin's cheerful conversation is of some use to me, but what would it be to your sweet consolation, my own Clare ?

We are now removed to a lodging on the Lung Arno, which is sufficiently commodious, and for which we pay thirteen sequins a month.<sup>1</sup> It is next door to that marble palace, and is called Palazzo Galetti, consisting of an excellent mezzanino, and of two rooms on the fourth story, all to the south, and with two fireplaces. The rooms above, one of which is Medwin's room and the other my study (congratulate me on my seclusion) are delightfully pleasant, and to-day I shall be employed in arranging my books and gathering my papers about me. Mary has a very good room below, and there is plenty of space for the babe. I expect the water of Pisa to relieve me, if indeed the disease be what is conjectured.

I have read or written nothing lately, having been much occupied by my sufferings, and by Medwin, who relates wonderful and interesting things of the interior of India. We have also been talking of a plan to be accomplished with a friend of his, a man of large fortune, who will be at Leghorn next Spring, and who designs to visit Greece, Syria, and Egypt in his own ship. This man has conceived a great admiration for my verses, and wishes above all

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<sup>1</sup> They left the Baths of San Giuliano on the date of this letter owing to a flood. See p. 840.

things that I could be induced to join his expedition. How far all this is practicable, considering the state of my finances I know not yet. I know that if it were it would give me the greatest pleasure, and the pleasure might be either doubled or divided by your presence or absence.

All this will be explained and determined in time; meanwhile lay to your heart what I say, and do not mention it in your letter to Mary.

The Gisbornes are acting as ill as possible about the Steamboat. Mr. G[isborne] wants to apply the engine to their own use, in working a bellows to cast iron, a mere scheme to defraud us. Henry came to the Bagni the other day, and I had a long and very explicit conversation with him, the result of which was that if the affairs which remained of the Steamboat were to be carried on through Mr. G[isborne], I absolutely refused to take any further part in the concern, except to receive whatever money they choose to give me as proceeding from the sale of the materials. At the same time should he decide on taking that side of the alternative, I assured him that I should take some pains to acquaint my friends with the vile treatment which I had received from him and his family. The result of the conversation was, that four hundred crowns were necessary to complete the boat, and that this sum should be raised upon the materials of the engine, and instantly applied to that purpose. I am in hopes thus, by enlisting their own interest in the concern, and showing my resolution to advance no more money to get it finished; though it is true that I risk my interest in the sale of the materials, which, if Mr. Gisborne should find some fresh scheme for preventing, the success of the enterprise would be all swallowed up in the debt then created. But at all events I should receive very little from the sale, and in this manner I may be repaid the whole.—The Gisbornes are people totally without faith.—I think they are altogether the most filthy and odious animals with which I ever came in contact.—They do not visit Mary as they promised, and

indeed if they did, I certainly should not stay in the house to receive them. I have already planned a retreat to Mrs. Mason's.

I am going to study Arabic—for a purpose and a motive as you may conceive.—I wish you would enquire for me at Florence whether there are an Arabic Grammar and Dictionary, and any other Arabic books, either printed or Manuscript, to be bought. You can first ask Dr. Bojti, and if he knows nothing, go to Molini's library and inquire of him. At all events go to Molini's and send me all the information you can pick up. I trust this to your kind love.

If I buy and pay for any I can send you scudi at the same time which I have made some ineffectual efforts to convey to Florence. Pardon me, my dearest, for mentioning scudi, and do not love me less because they are a portion of the inevitable dross of life which clings to our friendship.

Your most affectionate

SHELLEY.

384. TO JOHN GISBORNE

PISA,

Oct[ober] 29, 1820.

DEAR FRIEND,

Can you tell me anything about Arabic grammars, dictionaries, and manuscripts, and whether there are any native Arabs capable of teaching the language? Do not give yourself any trouble about the subject; but if you could answer or discover an answer to these questions without any pains, I should be very much obliged to you.

My kindest regards to Mrs. G[isborne] and Henry.

Yours very truly,

P. B. SHELLEY.

## 385. TO THE EDITOR OF THE "QUARTERLY REVIEW"

[Pisa,  
1820 ?]

SIR,

Should you cast your eye on the signature of this letter before you read the contents, you might imagine that they related to a slanderous paper which appeared in your *Review* some time since. I never notice anonymous attacks. The wretch who wrote it has doubtless the additional reward of a consciousness of his motives, besides the thirty guineas a sheet, or whatever it is that you pay him. Of course you cannot be answerable for all the writings which you edit, and I certainly bear you no ill-will for having edited the abuse to which I allude—indeed, I was too much amused by being compared to Pharaoh, not readily to forgive editor, printer, publisher, stitcher, or anyone, except the despicable writer, connected with something so exquisitely entertaining. Seriously speaking, I am not in the habit of permitting myself to be disturbed by what is said or written of me, though, I dare say, I may be condemned sometimes justly enough. But I feel, in respect to the writer in question, that "I am there sitting, where he durst not soar."

The case is different with the unfortunate subject of this letter, the author of "Endymion," to whose feelings and situation I entreat you to allow me to call your attention. I write considerably in the dark; but if it is Mr. Gifford that I am addressing, I am persuaded that in an appeal to his humanity and justice, he will acknowledge the *fas ab hoste doceri*. I am aware that the first duty of a Reviewer is towards the public, and I am willing to confess that the "Endymion" is a poem considerably defective, and that, perhaps, it deserved as much censure as the pages of your *Review* record against it; but, not to mention that there is certain contemptuousness of phraseology from which it is difficult for a critic to abstain, in the review of "Endymion,"

I do not think that the writer has given it its due praise. Surely the poem, with all its faults, is a very remarkable production for a man of Keats's age, and the promise of ultimate excellence is such as has rarely been afforded even by such as has afterwards attained high literary eminence. Look at book ii, line 833, etc., and book iii, line 113 to 120—read down that page, and then again from line 193. I could cite many other passages, to convince you that it deserved milder usage. Why it should have been reviewed at all, excepting for the purpose of bringing its excellences into notice, I cannot conceive, for it was very little read, and there was no danger that it should become a model to the age of that false taste, with which I confess that it is replenished.

Poor Keats was thrown into a dreadful state of mind by this review, which, I am persuaded, was not written with any intention of producing the effect, to which it has, at least, greatly contributed, of embittering his existence, and inducing a disease from which there are now but faint hopes of his recovery. The first effects are described to me to have resembled insanity, and it was by assiduous watching that he was restrained from effecting purposes of suicide. The agony of his sufferings at length produced the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs, and the usual process of consumption appears to have begun. He is coming to pay me a visit in Italy; but I fear that unless his mind can be kept tranquil, little is to be hoped from the mere influence of climate.

But let me not extort anything from your pity. I have just seen a second volume, published by him evidently in careless despair. I have desired my bookseller to send you a copy, and allow me to solicit your special attention to the fragment of a poem entitled "*Hyperion*," the composition of which was checked by the Review in question. The great proportion of this piece is surely in the very highest style of poetry. I speak impartially, for the canons of taste to which Keats has conformed in his other



compositions are the very reverse of my own. I leave you to judge for yourself: it would be an insult to you to suppose that from motives, however honourable, you would lend yourself to a deception of the public.

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*(This letter was never sent)*

### 386. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

PISA,

November (probably 8), 1820.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I also delayed to answer your last letter, because I was waiting for something to say: or at least something that should be likely to be interesting to you. The box containing my books, and consequently your Essay against the cultivation of poetry,<sup>1</sup> has not arrived; my wonder, meanwhile, in what manner you support such a heresy in this matter-of-fact and money-loving age, holds me in suspense. Thank you for your kindness in correcting "Prometheus," which I am afraid gave you a great deal of trouble. Among the modern things which have reached me is a volume of poems by Keats;<sup>2</sup> in other respects insignificant enough, but containing the fragment of a poem called "Hyperion." I dare say you have not time to read it; but it is certainly an astonishing piece of writing, and gives me a conception of Keats which I confess I had not before.

I hear from Mr. Gisborne that you are surrounded with statements and accounts—a chaos of which you are the God; a sepulchre which encloses in a dormant state the chrysalis of the Pavonian Psyche. May you start into life some day and give us another "Melincourt." Your

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 846.

<sup>2</sup> "Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and other Poems by John Keats, author of Endymion. London. Printed for Taylor & Hessey, Fleet Street. 1820." Keats's last volume, containing, besides the poems stated on the title, "Hyperion."

"Melincourt" is exceedingly admired, and I think much more so than any of your other writings. In this respect the world judges rightly. There is more of the true spirit, and an object less indefinite, than in either "Headlong Hall" or "Scythrop."<sup>1</sup>

I am, speaking literarily, infirm of purpose. I have great designs, and feeble hopes of ever accomplishing them. I read books, and, though I am ignorant enough, they seem to teach me nothing. To be sure, the reception the public have given me might [go] far enough to damp any man's enthusiasm. They teach you, it may be said, only what is true. Very true, I doubt not, and the more true the less agreeable. I can compare my experience in this respect to nothing but a series of wet blankets. I have been reading nothing but Greek and Spanish. Plato and Calderon have been my gods. We are in the Town of Pisa. A school-fellow of mine from India<sup>2</sup> is staying with me, and we are beginning Arabic together. Mary is writing a novel,<sup>3</sup> illustrative of the manners of the Middle Ages in Italy, which she has raked out of fifty old books. I promise myself success from it; and certainly, if what is wholly original will succeed, I shall not be disappointed. A person will call on you with an order from me to deliver him the piano.—If it is at Marlow you can put him in the requisite train for getting it.

Adieu. *In publica comoda peccem, si longo sermone.*

Ever faithfully yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

387. TO JAMES OLLIER  
(London)

PISA,

November 10, 1820.

DEAR SIR,

Mr. Gisborne has sent me a copy of the "Prometheus,"

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<sup>1</sup> See Peacock's "Nightmare Abbey."

<sup>2</sup> His cousin Thomas Medwin.

<sup>3</sup> "Valperga."

which is certainly most beautifully printed. It is to be regretted that the errors of the press are so numerous, and in many respects so destructive of the sense of a species of poetry which, I fear, even without this disadvantage, very few will understand or like. I shall send you the list of *errata* in a day or two.

I send some poems to be added to the pamphlet of "Julian and Maddalo." I think you have some other smaller poems belonging to that collection, and I believe you know that I do not wish my name to be printed on the title-page, though I have no objection to my being known as the author.

I enclose also another poem, which I do not wish to be printed with "Julian and Maddalo," but at the end of the second edition of "The Cenci," or of any other of my writings to which my name is affixed, if any other should at present have arrived at a second edition, which I do not expect. I have a purpose in this arrangement, and have marked the poem I mean by a cross.

I can sympathise too feelingly in your brother's misfortune.<sup>1</sup> It has been my hard fate also to watch the gradual death of a beloved child, and to survive him. Present my respects to your brother.

My friend Captain Medwin is with me, and has shown me a poem on Indian hunting, which he has sent you to publish.<sup>2</sup> It is certainly a very elegant and classical composition, and, even if it does not belong to the highest style of poetry, I should be surprised if it did not succeed. May I challenge your kindness to do what you can for it?

You will hear from me again in a post or two. The "Julian and Maddalo," and the accompanying poems, are

<sup>1</sup> "Charles Olher had just lost a daughter."—Lady Shelley's note.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently Medwin's book entitled "Sketches in Hindoostan with other Poems," which Olher published in 1821. The two longest poems in the volume are "The Lion Hunt" and "The Pindarees."

all my saddest verses raked up into one heap. I mean to mingle more smiles with my tears in future.

Your obedient servant,

P. B. SHELLEY.

383. TO JOHN GISBORNE  
(Leghoin)

PISA,

Oggi (November, 1820).

MY DEAR SIR,

I send you the Phædon and Tacitus. I congratulate you on your conquest of the "Iliad." You must have been astonished at the perpetually increasing magnificence of the last seven books. Homer there truly begins to be himself. The battle of the Scamander, the funeral of Patroclus, and the high and solemn close of the whole bloody tale in tenderness and inexpressible sorrow, are wrought in a manner incomparable with anything of the same kind. The "Odyssey" is sweet, but there is nothing like this.

I am bathing myself in the light and odour of the flowery and starry "Autos."<sup>1</sup> I have read them all more than once. Henry will tell you how much I am in love with Pacchiani.<sup>2</sup> I suffer from my disease considerably.

<sup>1</sup> "Calderon, in his religious 'Autos,' has attempted to fulfil some of the higher conditions of dramatic representation neglected by Shakespeare; such as the establishing a relation between the drama and religion, and the accommodating them to music and dancing; but he omits the observation of conditions still more important, and more is lost than gained by the substitution of the rigidly-defined and ever-repeated idealisms of a distorted superstition for the living impersonations of the truth of human passion."—Shelley's "Defence of Poetry."

<sup>2</sup> "Francesco Pacchiani, known in Pisa as 'il diavolo Pacchiani,' a man of forty-eight years old, distinguished as a chemist, was, or had lately been, a professor of physics at the University. As a young man, his experiments with the galvanic pile had filled him with hope that he had discovered a new method of producing muriatic acid; but the event did not confirm his expectations. Although still received in good society, Pacchiani had fallen in fortune and in repute. He was in orders, but his religion was that

Henry will also tell you how much, and how whimsically, he alarmed me last night.

My kindest remembrances to Mrs. Gisborne, and best wishes for your health and happiness.

Faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

I have a new Calderon coming from Paris.

389. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT  
(Florence)

CASA GALETTI, PISA,  
November, WEDNESDAY (1820).

MY DEAR CLARE,

Something indeed must be instantly decided respecting your present situation—unfit in every respect for you, and fraught with consequences to your health and spirits which I cannot endure to think of. I had spoken to Mrs. Mason of it, and her reply was that *when you return from Pisa to Florence*, she will give you a letter to the Princess, charging me at the same time to keep this promise a secret from you : for what motive I cannot divine. I have not done so, you see—and indeed I could not, without urging your immediate return. The great thing now is, if possible, to come to Pisa before you shall stand engaged for another month, or perhaps another three months—for such was the arrangement decided upon at Florence.<sup>1</sup> Could

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of 'Epicurus owne sone;' the priest's cap which he wore he named his 'Tartuffesmetro,' or measure for hypocrisy. Medwin says that 'Shelley at first listened with rapt attention to his eloquence, which he compared to that of Coleridge.' But if 'il diavolo' was ever welcome to Casa Galetti, it can have been only for a very brief period. Even the devil, however, writes Mary, has his use, for it was Pacchiani who led her to the acquaintance of Prince Mavrocordato, and, what is of more importance, he had also introduced Shelley to Emilia Viviani, to whose family he was Confessor. —Dowden's "Shelley," Vol. II, pp. 361-2.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Dowden says that "Clare's trial-month as governess to Professor Bojti's children passed unhappily." On November 21st she took Shelley's advice and returned to Pisa.—"Life of Shelley," Vol. II, pp. 357-8,

you not make some excuse for preceding them to Pisa ? Or still better, could you not do it without assigning any reason, and then determine with me and Mrs. Mason what should be done on their arrival ? This must be done, or you stand pledged for some indefinite time.

The only consideration to make you hesitate, is how far such a step would offend Mrs. Mason—that is, how far it would affect any future aid you might derive from her. Poor Mrs. M. is now very ill, slowly convalescing from a dangerous colic ; she cannot bear the light, or the air, or the least motion. You may judge, she is (in) no state to permit me to agitate this question. Before her illness, when I called on her, she seemed to think it weak and unreasonable in you, not to bear all this solitude and inconvenience in the hope of some change, or something that she could or would do.—She opposed strongly the idea of your return ; and it was on that occasion that she spoke of the Princess Montemilitto ; which introduction, if it could be carried into effect, would certainly place you in a situation to require no other. But as she has not seen or heard from the Princess for sixteen years, we cannot be sure of the reception her recommendation would meet. Everything, however, consists in the manner—and I by no means recommend you to freeze or mope yourself to death on the chance of this Princess.—I would advise, contriving by some form of words, to part from your hosts on the best possible terms, and with a mutual understanding that the connexion was to be renewed again, so soon as you had fulfilled the object of your leaving them.—Leave some sort of opening, but just so small as that they should not be able without further communication to hold you liable on the 20th for three additional months.

It is a great pity that the day of their arrival at Pisa exceeds the month, or it might all have admitted of a far simpler mode of arrangement. I don't think Mrs. Mason could be seriously angry—I am sure she would have no reason—nor do I think that it would make any difference

in her giving you an introduction to the Princess. The only care need be, that it should be so managed as not, at least for the present, to offend or alarm the Bojtis, and that you tell Mrs. Mason that you determined to employ the interval of the few days that remained of the month in taking her advice respecting how far a further residence with them could be made available to your purposes. And that you were determined (as I think you right to determine) not to make a three months' additional engagement to spend the winter in the frore climate of Florence, merely to suffer. My advice therefore is, that you take a place in the Diligence and return here instantly, without offending or alarming the Bojtis. You cannot hesitate without making yourself liable for an engagement of three additional months, and I am persuaded that Mrs. Mason is too reasonable and too good not to feel that this step is completely justifiable by the alternative in which you stand, either of taking it, or engaging in a longer term—in which unless some alteration takes place you expend health and spirits for no imaginable purpose.—This step pledges you to nothing,—and after painful and serious consideration of the circumstances of your situation it is my deliberate advice. Read this letter over twice or three times, before you decide to act, and completely understand what you are about.

We are at Casa Galetti, next door to that marble palace with *Alla Giornata* written on it.

There is yet no letter from Ravenna—a delay which you cannot from experience think extraordinary.

I do not send you the Papers ; because I do not see how you can do otherwise than come.—Let me repeat it again—do not part on bad or even on indifferent terms with the Bojtis. All depends on that—and it is so easy to say that someone is ill, if you think it necessary to make any express explanation.

It rains incessantly, but the climate is exceedingly mild and we have no fires. How sorry I am, my poor girl, to

hear that your glands are bad.—You must take care of yourself this winter, and eat nourishing food, and try and deceive care. How I long to see you again, and take what care I can of you—but do not imagine that if I did not most seriously think it best for you that I would advise you to return. I have suffered horribly from my side, but my general health decidedly improves, and there is now no doubt but that it is a disease of the kidneys which, however it sometimes makes life intolerable, has, Vaccá assures me, no tendency to endanger it. May it be prolonged that I may be the source of whatever consolation or happiness you are capable of receiving !

Mary is well, and the babe brilliantly well, and very good—he scarcely suffers at all from his teeth.

Medwin is very agreeable—I do not know him well enough to say that he is amiable. He plays at chess, and falls into our habits of reading in the evening, and Mary likes him well enough.—Henry Reveley has been frequently at Pisa, and always dines with us, in spite of a conversation which I had with him, and which was intended to put an end to all intercourse between me and that base family.—I have not the heart to put my interdict in effect upon Henry, he is so very miserable, and such a whipped and trembling dog. You have no conception of the stories that he tells about the Riccis. There is no decisive news yet from London about the Queen—it is expected this day, and all the papers of the trial have been kept from you. Adieu, dearest—be careful to tear this letter to pieces as I have written [confidently ?].

Yours faithfully,

S.

This only bit of paper I have is the beginning of a letter addressed to Henry<sup>1</sup>—never mind it.

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<sup>1</sup> The leaf in which the conclusion of this letter was written has been the rejected commencement of a letter to Henry Reveley. The six lines of which the cancelled fragment consists are quite legible.



I am happy that the "Hyperion" and "Prometheus" please you. My verses please so few persons that I make much of the encouragement of the few, whose judgment (if I were to listen to Vanity, the familiar spirit of our race) I should say with Shakspeare and Plato "outweighed a whole theatre of others."

[Addressed outside],  
Miss CLAIRMONT,  
Presse al Prof. BOITI,  
dirimpetto Palazzo Pitti,  
Florence.

### 390. TO MARIANNE HUNT

[PISA.]

November 11, 1820.

MY BEST MARIANNE,

I am delighted to hear that you complain of me for not writing to you, although I have much more reason to complain of you for not writing to me. At least it promises me a letter from you, and you know with what pleasure we receive, and with what anxiety we expect intelligence from you—almost the only friends who now remain to us.

I am afraid that the strict system of expense to which you are limited annoys you all very much, and that Hunt's health suffers both from that and from the incredible exertions which I see by the *Indicators* and *Examiners* that he is making. Would to Heaven that I had the power of doing you some good! but when you are sure that the wish is sincere, the bare expression of it may help to cheer you.

The Gisbornes are arrived, and have brought news of you, and some books, the principal part of which, however, are yet to arrive by sea. Keats's new volume has arrived to us, and the fragment called "Hyperion" promises for him that he is destined to become one of the first writers of the age. His other things are imperfect enough, and, what is worse, written in the bad sort of style which is

becoming fashionable among those who fancy they are imitating Hunt and Wordsworth. But of all these things nothing is worse than a volume by Barry Cornwall with "The Sicilian Story." "The Sicilian Story" itself is pretty enough, but the other things in the volume, I hope that Hunt thinks are abominable, in spite of his extracting the only three good stanzas from "Gyges" with his usual good nature in the *Examiner*. Indeed, I ought not to complain of Hunt's good nature, for no one owes so much to it. Is not the vulgarity of these wretched imitations of Lord Byron carried to a pitch of the sublime? His indecencies, too, both against sexual nature, and against human nature in general, sit very awkwardly upon him. He only affects the libertine: he is really a very amiable, friendly, and agreeable man, I hear. But is not this monstrous? In Lord Byron all this has an analogy with the general system of his character, and the wit and poetry which surround hide with their light the darkness of the thing itself. They contradict it even; they prove that the strength and beauty of human nature can survive and conquer all that appears most inconsistent with it. But for a writer to be at once filthy and dull is a crime against gods, men and columns. For heaven's sake do not show this to anyone but Hunt, for it would irritate the wasp's nest of the irritable race of poets.

Where is Keats now?<sup>1</sup> I am anxiously expecting him in Italy, when I shall take care to bestow every possible attention on him. I consider his a most valuable life, and I am deeply interested in his safety. I intend to be the physician both of his body and his soul, to keep the one warm, and to teach the other Greek and Spanish. I am aware, indeed, in part, that I am nourishing a rival who will far surpass me; and this is an additional motive, and will be an added pleasure.

We are at this moment removing from the Bagni to Pisa,

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<sup>1</sup> Keats left England in September, 1820, for Italy, accompanied by his friend, Joseph Severn, the artist.

for the Serchio has broken its banks, and all the country about is under water.<sup>1</sup> An old friend and fellow-townsmen of mine, Captain Medwin, is on a visit to us at present, and we anxiously expect Keats, to whom I would write if I knew where to address.

Adieu, my dear Marianne. Write soon; kiss all the babes for me, and tell me news of them, and give my love to Bessy and Hunt.

Yours ever affectionately,

P. B. SHELLEY.

391. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT

(Florence)

[Postmark, PISA,

January 2, 1821.]<sup>2</sup>

MY DEAR CLARE,

I am seriously distressed to perceive by your letters the vacillating state of your health and spirits: and can only offer you the consolation of unavailing wishes. If they were as effectual as they are sincere, your ills would have a very short duration. You do me injustice in imagining

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<sup>1</sup> The season had been very wet, and rain had fallen for several days, when, on October 25, the Shelleys' house was flooded, and they moved on October 29 to Pisa. See p. 825. "At the foot of our garden," writes Mrs. Shelley, "ran the canal that communicated between the Serchio and the Arno. The Serchio overflowed its banks, and, breaking its bounds, this canal also overflowed. All this part of the country is below the level of its rivers, and the consequence was that it was speedily flooded. The rising waters filled the square of the baths, in the lower part of which our house was situated. The canal overflowed in the garden behind; the rising waters on either side at last burst open the doors, and, meeting in the house, rose to the height of six feet. It was a picturesque sight at night to see the peasants driving the cattle from the plains below to the hills above the baths. A fire was kept up to guide these across the ford; and the forms of the men and animals showed in dark relief against the glare of the flames, which was reflected again in the waters that filled the square."

<sup>2</sup> Clare had returned to Florence after spending Christmas with the Shelleys at Pisa.

that I am in any degree insensible to your pleasure or pain. I wish, since I am so incapable of communicating the one or relieving the other, that I could be so.

I see Emilia<sup>1</sup> sometimes, who always talks of you and laments your absence. She continues to enchant me infinitely; and I soothe myself with the idea that I make the discomfort of her captivity lighter to her by demonstration of the interest which she has awakened in me.

I have not been able to see until the last day or two,

<sup>1</sup> Teresa Emilia Viviani, to whom Shelley addressed his poem, the "Epipsychidion." She had been confined in the convent of St. Anna, Pisa, for two years when Shelley made her acquaintance through Pacchiani, confessor to the Viviani family. Her father, Count Viviani, had married a second time a lady, not much older than his two daughters, who had been sent from home into separate convents through the influence of their stepmother, under the pretence of completing their education. Medwin, who accompanied Shelley on one of the many visits that he paid Emilia in her convent, described her as "indeed lovely and interesting. Her profuse black hair, tied in the most simple knot, after the manner of a Greek muse in the Florence gallery, displayed to its full height, her fair brow, fair as that of the marble of which I speak. She was also of about the same height as the antique. Her features possessed a rare faultlessness, and almost Grecian contour, the nose and forehead making a straight line. . . . Her eyes had the sleepy voluptuousness, if not the colour, of Beatrice Cenci's. They had indeed no definite colour, changing with the changing feeling, to dark to light, as the soul animated them. Her cheek was pale, too, as marble, owing to her confinement and want of air, or perhaps to 'thought.' There was a lark in the parlour that had lately been caught. 'Poor prisoner,' she said, looking at it compassionately, 'you will die of grief! How I pity thee! What must thou suffer, when thou hearest in the clouds the songs of thy parent birds, or some flocks of thy kind on the wing, in search of other skies—of new fields—of new delights! But like me, thou wilt be forced to remain here always—to wear out thy miserable existence here always—to wear out thy miserable existence here. Why can I not release thee?' " Mrs. Shelley introduced Emilia into her novel "Lodore," 1835. Lady Shelley says that Emilia "was subsequently married to a gentleman chosen for her by her father; and, after pining in his society, and in the marshy solitudes of the Maremma, for six years, she left him, with the consent of her parent, and died of consumption in a dilapidated old mansion at Florence."—"Shelley Memorials," p. 149.

or I should have written to you. My eyes are still weak. I have suffered also considerably from my disease; and am already in imagination preparing to be cut for the stone, in spite of Vaccà's consolatory assurance.

We send you the papers; and a parcel containing your Habit and "Sintram," etc., has been prepared some days for the Procaccino, who does not pass until to-morrow. You will probably receive that and this letter at once.

All your wishes have been attended to respecting "Julian and Maddalo," which never was intended for publication.<sup>1</sup>

So it seems that it would have been better for you to have remained at Pisa. Yet being now at Florence make the best profit of your situation: and do not on any account neglect, if possible, to present the letters to Princess Montemilto, taking especial care to specify *who* is the writer. You ought to be aware that if this gland should be scrofulous, no small portion of the disease consists in the dejection of spirits and inactivity of mind attached to it; it is at once a cause and an effect of it; for which the best remedy is society and amusement, and for which even bustle and occupation would be a palliation. Pacchiani is not yet returned.

Farewell, my dear girl. Confide in the sincere friendship and unceasing interest of yours affectionately,

S.

[Addressed outside],

Miss CLAIRMONT,

Presso Professore Bojti,

drumpetto Palazzo Pitti,

Ferienze.

<sup>1</sup> Professor Dowden points out that this "statement contradicts Shelley's words to Hunt, August 15, 1819, begging him to give 'Julian and Maddalo' to Ollier for publication. In May and November, 1820, and February, 22, 1821, Shelley wrote to Ollier in respect to the publication of the poem. It was not, however, published till after his death. Miss Clairmont probably objected to the appearance of the passage which describes 'Allegra.'"—"Life of Shelley," Vol. II, p. 385. See p. 622.

392. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIMONT  
(Florence)

PISA, TUESDAY EVENING,  
[January 16],<sup>1</sup> 1821.

MY DEAR CLARE,

Many thanks for your kind and tender letter which Mrs. M[ason] gave me to-day, several days I believe after it had arrived.—I had been very ill,<sup>2</sup> and had not seen her for a fortnight. I had several times been going to write to you, to request you to love me better than you do—when meanwhile your letter arrives.<sup>3</sup> I shall punctually follow all such portions of the advice it contains which are practicable.

I write to-night that I may not seem to neglect you, though I have little time: I am delighted to hear of your recovered health—may I entreat you to be cautious in keeping it? Mine is far better than it has been; and the *relapse* which I now suffer into a state of ease from one of pain, is attended with such an excessive susceptibility of nature, that I suffer equally from pleasure and from pain. You will ask me naturally enough *where* I find any pleasure? The wind, the light, the air, the smell of a flower affects me with violent emotions. There needs no catalogue of the causes of pain.

I see Emily sometimes; and whether her presence is the source of pain or pleasure to me, I am equally ill-fated

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<sup>1</sup> This date is given by Professor Dowden.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley addressed a letter from Pisa on Feb. 20, 1821, to Vincent Novello, in which he speaks of recovering from a severe attack of ophthalmia, and adds that his eyes are yet very inadequate to the fatigue of writing. He also expresses his indebtedness to Mr. Rickman for his forbearance, and would regard it as a great additional favour to be allowed a year from the date of writing for the payment of the remainder. Perhaps this relates to Cho Rickman, from whom, in Dec., 1812, Shelley had ordered a large number of books (see p. 371).

<sup>3</sup> "Clare had complained that Shelley did not take an interest in her pleasure or her pain."—Prof. Dowden's note.

in both. I am deeply interested in her destiny, and that interest can in no manner influence it. She is not, however, insensible to my sympathy, and she counts it among her alleviations. As much comfort as she receives from my attachment to her, *I lose*.

There is no reason that you should fear any mixture of that which you call *love*. My conception of Emilia's talents augments every day. Her moral nature is fine—but not above circumstances; yet I think her tender and true—which is always something. How many are only one of these things at a time!

So much for sentiment and ethics. The Williamses are come, and Mrs. W. dined here to-day, an extremely pretty and gentle woman, apparently not *very* clever.<sup>1</sup> I like her very much. I have only seen her for an hour, but I will tell you more another time. Mary will write you sheets of gossip. I have not seen Mr. W. The Greek expedition appears to be broken up. No news of any kind that I know of.

You delight me with your progress in German, in spite of the reproach which accompanies the account of it. Occupy, amuse, instruct, multiply yourself and your faculties—and defy the foul fiend. I wish to Heaven, my dear girl, that *I* could be of any avail to add to your pleasures or diminish your pain—how ardently you cannot know; you only know, as you frequently take care to tell me, how vainly. I can do you no other good than in keeping up the unnatural connection between this feeble mass of diseases and infirmities and the vapid and weary spirit doomed to drag it through the world [here some words are blotted out by Miss Clairmont]. I took up the pen for an instant only to thank you,—and, if you will, to kiss you for your kind attention to me, and I find I have written in ill spirits, which may infect you. Let them not do so!

<sup>1</sup> The Williamses landed at Leghorn on Jan. 13, 1821, and were introduced by Medwin a few days later to Shelley and Mary.

I will write again to-morrow. Meanwhile, yours most tenderly,

S.

[Addressed outside],  
La Siga. CLAIRMONT,  
presso al Professore BOJTI,  
dirempetto Palazzo Pitti,  
Firenze.

392A. TO CHARLES AND JAMES OLLIER  
(London)

PISA,

Jan[uary] 20, 1820 [misdated for 1821].

DEAR SIR,

I send you the "Witch of Atlas," a fanciful poem, which, if its merit be measured by the labour which it cost, is worth nothing; and the Errata of "Prometheus," which I ought to have sent long since—a formidable list, as you will see.

I have lately, and but lately, received Mr. Gisborne's parcel, with reviews, etc. I request you to convey to Mr. Procter my thanks for the present of his works, as well as for the pleasure which I received from the perusal, especially of the "Dramatic Sketches."

The reviews of my "Cenci" (though some of them, and especially that marked "John Scott," are written with great malignity) on the whole give me as much encouragement as a person of my habits of thinking is capable of receiving from such a source, which is, inasmuch as they coincide with, and confirm, my own decisions. My next attempt (if I should write more) will be a drama, in the composition of which I shall attend to the advice of my critics, to a certain degree, but I doubt whether I *shall* write more. I could be content either with the Hell or the Paradise of poetry; but the torments of its purgatory vex me, without exciting my power sufficiently to put an end to the vexation.

I have also to thank *you* for the present of one or two of your publications. I am enchanted with your *Literary*



*Miscellany*, although the last article it contains has excited my polemical faculties so violently, that the moment I get rid of my ophthalmia I mean to set about an answer to it, which I will send to you, if you please. It is very clever, but, I think, very false.<sup>1</sup> Who is your commentator on the German Drama? He is a powerful thinker, though I differ from him *toto cælo* about the Devils of Dante and Milton. If you know him personally, pray ask him from me what he means by receiving the *spirit into me*, and (if really it is any good) how one is to get at it. I was immeasurably amused by the quotation from Schlegel about the way in which the popular faith is destroyed—first the Devil, then the Holy Ghost, then God the Father. I had written a Lucianic essay to prove the same thing.<sup>2</sup> There are two beautiful stories, too, in this *Miscellany*. It pleased me altogether infinitely. I was also much pleased with the *Retrospective Review*—that is, with all the quotations from old books in it; but it is very ill executed.

When the spirit moves you, write and give me an account of the ill success of my verses.

Who wrote the review in your publication of my "Cenci"? It was written in a friendly spirit, and, if you know the author, I wish you would tell him from me how much obliged I am to him for this spirit, more gratifying to me than any literary laud.

Dear Sir,

Messrs. OLLIER,  
Vere Street, Bond Street, London.

Yours very truly,  
P. B. S.

<sup>1</sup> The article, entitled "The Four Ages of Poetry," was contributed by T. L. Peacock to the first and apparently the only number of Ollier's "Literary Miscellany, in Prose and Verse, by Several hands," 1820. Shelley replied with his "Defence of Poetry," which was intended for the "Miscellany;" it remained unpublished, however, until 1840, when it was included in the "Essays and Letters."

<sup>2</sup> "The writer was the late Archdeacon Hare, who, despite his orthodoxy, was a great admirer of Shelley's genius. He contended that Milton erred in making the Devil a majestic being, and hoped that Shelley would in time humble his soul, and 'receive the spirit into him.'"—Lady Shelley's note.

## 393. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

PISA,

February 15, 1821.<sup>1</sup>

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

The last letter I received from you, nearly four months from the date thereof, reached me by the boxes which the Gisbornes sent by sea. I am happy to learn that you continue in good external and internal preservation. I received at the same time your printed denunciations<sup>2</sup> against general, and your written ones against particular, poetry; and I agree with you as decidedly in the latter as I differ in the former. The man whose critical gall is not stirred up by such *ottava rime*s as Barry Cornwall's, may safely be conjectured to possess no gall at all. The world is pale with the sickness of such stuff. At the same time, your anathemas against poetry itself excited me to a sacred rage, or *caloëthes*<sup>3</sup> *scribendi* of vindicating the insulted Muses. I had the greatest possible desire to break a lance with you, within the lists of a magazine, in honour of my mistress Urania; but God willed that I should be too lazy, and wrested the victory from your hope; since first having unhorsed poetry, and the universal sense of the wisest in all ages, an easy conquest would have remained to you in me, the knight of the shield of shadow and the lance of gossamere. Besides, I was at that moment reading Plato's "Ion," which I recommend you to reconsider. Perhaps in the comparison of Platonic and Malthusian doctrines, the *maius errare* of Cicero is a justifiable argument; but I have a whole quiver of arguments on such a subject.

Have you seen Godwin's answer to the apostle of the

<sup>1</sup> Shelley has written 1820 apparently in error.

<sup>2</sup> Peacock's article on the "Four Ages of Poetry."

<sup>3</sup> Caloëthes, the opposite of Cacoëthes.

rich?<sup>1</sup> And what do you think of it? It has not yet reached me, nor has your box, of which I am in daily expectation.

We are now in the crisis and point of expectation in Italy. The Neapolitan and Austrian armies are rapidly approaching each other, and every day the news of a battle may be expected. The former have advanced into the Ecclesiastical States, and taken hostages from Rome, to assure themselves of the neutrality of that power, and appear determined to try their strength in open battle. I need not tell you how little chance there is that the new and undisciplined levies of Naples should stand against a superior force of veteran troops. But the birth of liberty in nations abounds in examples of a reversal of the ordinary laws of calculation: the defeat of the Austrians would be the signal of insurrection throughout all Italy.

I am devising literary plans of some magnitude. But nothing is so difficult and unwelcome as to write without a confidence of finding readers; and if my play of "The Cenci" found none or few, I despair of ever producing anything that shall merit them.

Among your anathemas of the modern attempts in poetry, do you include Keats's "Hyperion"? I think it very fine. His other poems are worth little; but if the "Hyperion" be not grand poetry, none has been produced by our contemporaries.

I suppose *you* are writing nothing but Indian laws, etc. I have but a faint idea of your occupation; but I suppose it has much to do with pen and ink.

Mary desires to be kindly remembered to you; and I remain, my dear Peacock, yours very faithfully,

P. B. SHELLEY.

<sup>1</sup> The book referred to is "Of Population. An Enquiry concerning the power of Increase in the numbers of Mankind, being an Answer to Mr. Malthus's Essay on that subject" (London, Longmans, 1820).

394. TO CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

PISA,

Feb[ruary] 16, 1821.

DEAR SIR,

I send you three poems—"Ode to Naples," a sonnet, and a longer piece, entitled "Epipsychidion."<sup>1</sup> The two former are my own; and you will be so obliging as to take the first opportunity of publishing according to your own discretion.

The longer poem, I desire, should not be considered as my own; indeed, in a certain sense, it is a production of a portion of me already dead; and in this sense the advertisement is no fiction. It is to be published simply for the esoteric few; and I make its author a secret, to avoid the malignity of those who turn sweet food into poison; transforming all they touch into the corruption of their own natures. My wish with respect to it is, that it should be printed immediately in the simplest form, and merely one hundred copies; those who are capable of judging and feeling rightly with respect to a composition of so abstruse a nature, certainly do not arrive at that number—among those, at least, who would ever be excited to read an obscure and anonymous production; and it would give me no pleasure that the vulgar should read it. If you have any bookselling reason against publishing so small a number as a hundred, merely, distribute copies among those to whom you think the poetry would afford any pleasure, and send me, as soon as you can, a copy by the post. I have written it so as to give very little trouble, I hope, to the printer, or to the person who revises. I would

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<sup>1</sup> "Epipsychidion. / Verses addressed to the Noble / and unfortunate Lady / Emilia Viviani / Now imprisoned in the Convent of — / quotation / London / C. and J. Ollier, Vere Street, Bond Street / MDCCCXXI." Shelley had completed the poem before the end of the preceding year, for Mary Shelley in writing to Leigh

be much obliged to you if you would take this office on yourself.

Is there any expectation of a second edition of the "Revolt of Islam?" I have many corrections to make in it, and one part will be wholly remodelled. I am employed in high and new designs in verse; but they are the labours of years, perhaps.

We expect here every day the news of a battle between the armies of Austria and Naples. The latter have advanced upon Rome; and the first affair will probably take place in the Ecclesiastical States. You may imagine the expectation of all here.

Pray send me news of my intellectual children. For "Prometheus" I expect and desire no great sale. "The Cenci" ought to have been popular.

I remain, dear Sir,

Your very obedient servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

395. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT  
(Florence)

PISA,

FRIDAY,

[February 16, 1821.]

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I write in great haste at the Banker's not to lose the Post,

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Hunt on December 29, 1820, says: "He [Shelley] has written a long poem ['Epipsychidion'] which no one has ever read, and like the illustrious Sotheby, gives the law to a few distinguished Blues of Pisa." In the "Advertisement" Shelley speaks of the poem as having been written by a person who "died at Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he had bought, and where it was his hope to have realized a scheme of life suited, perhaps, to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this." The advertisement is signed "S."

and send you a check for two months.—A thousand thanks for your affectionate letter, which to me is as water in the desert. I hope to tell you of Del Rosso by next post; he has just sent for his money, which is paid him.

Adieu, best Clare,

Yours ever,

[Addressed outside],

S.

MISS CLAIRMONT,

Presso al Prof. Bojti dirimpetto,  
Palazzo Pitti, Firenze.

396. TO DR. HUME

PISA,

February 17, 1820 [ ? in error for 1821].

SIR,

I regret exceedingly that a mistake occasioned by a temporary pressure of affairs should have caused the annuity awarded to my children to have remained a quarter in arrear. If you will take the trouble to present the enclosed note to my friend Mr. Smith of the Stock Exchange any day after the 25th of March, that quarter together with the quarter in arrear will be paid; and such measures are taken as will prevent any possible future misunderstanding on the subject.<sup>1</sup>

Allow me to take this opportunity of enquiring into the present state of the health and intellectual improvement of my children. I feel assured, although I have not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with you, that you will excuse and comply with this request of a father who is the victim of the unexampled oppression of being forbidden the exercise of his parental duties; suffering in his own person the violation of those rights and those ties which until this instance the fiercest religious persecutions had ever considered sacred. I only advert to my own wrongs—

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 864.

for the hour of redress is yet to arrive—that I may anticipate the gratitude which I shall owe to yourself and Mrs. Hume for the kindness and attention with which you doubtless perform all those (duties I can hardly call them) to my unfortunate children, except those which none but a parent can perform. I doubt not when they shall be restored to me, but that the period which they have spent under your care will be remembered both by them and by me as having in some degree softened the inevitable ill of this unnatural separation.

Pray render acceptable to Mrs. Hume my best compts.

I remain, Sir,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

397. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT  
(Florence)

SUNDAY [February 18, 1821.]<sup>1</sup>

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I wrote a line only with the check, which I hope you have received. I had not time on that day to answer your letters.

Your predilection for Germany, German literature and manners, and for an attempt at forming some connections there, still continues. There can be no harm in making the attempt, should you succeed in finding a fit occasion for it, because you can always recede in case it should not answer your expectations. The situation of *Dame de compagnie* is one indeed in which there is little to be hoped compared with what is to be feared ; calculating on common

<sup>1</sup> Professor Dowden suggests the date of this letter.

cases, but I am willing to believe that yours is an exception to these, and that every one who knows you intimately must find a necessity of interesting themselves deeply in you.—But what are your opportunities, that you so confidently discuss the merits of the question, as if the determination of it were within your power? Has the Princess engaged to interest herself in your affairs,—or any other of your acquaintances at Florence? If, indeed, it be in your power to accompany some German Lady of rank to her own country, I think, under the impressions you seem to have conceived, you ought not to delay putting it into effect. It is not as if you had no scheme for life in reserve to which you can retreat.

But you can always reassume your present situation (*i.e.*, of a governess).

You are indeed Germanising very fast, and the remark you made of the distinction between the manner in which mind is expressed upon the physiognomy or the entire figure of the Italian or the Austrian is in the choicest style of the *criticism of pure reason*. . . . There is a great deal of truth in it: of truth surrounded and limited by so many exceptions, as entirely to destroy its being, as a practical law of pathognomy. I hope you will find Germany and the Germans answer your expectations. I have had no opportunity of forming an idea of them—their Philosophy, as far as I can understand it, contemplates only the silver side of the shield of truth; better in this respect than the French, who only saw the narrow edge of it.

You send no news of Naples and Neapolitan affairs; we know nothing of them except what we hear from Florence. Every post may be expected to bring decisive news, for even the news that they defend themselves against so immense and well-appointed a force is decisive—I hate the cowardly way which prompts such base stories as Sgricci's<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sgricci (1793?-1836), the improvisatore, who was introduced to the Shelleys by Pacchiani, and who became a visitor at the Casa Galetti. On December 21, 1820, Shelley attended Sgricci's



about the Neapolitans: a set of slaves who dare not to imitate the high example of clasping even the shadow of Freedom, allege the ignorance and excesses of a populace, which oppression has made savage in sentiment and understanding.

That the populace of the city of Naples are brutal, who denies to be taught? they cannot improvise Tragedies as Sgricci can, but is it certain that under no excitement they would be incapable of more enthusiasm for their country? Besides it is not of them we speak, but of the people of the Kingdom of Naples, the cultivators of the soil; whom a sudden and great impulse might awaken into citizens and men, as the French and Spaniards have been awakened, and may render instruments of a system of future social life before which the existing anarchies of Europe will be dissolved and absorbed.—This feeling is base among the Tuscans about Naples. As to the Austrians I doubt not that they are strong men, well disciplined, obeying the master motion like the wheels of a perfect engine: they may even have, as men, more individual excellence and perfection (not that I believe it) than the Neapolitans,—but all these things, if the Spirit of Regeneration is abroad, are chaff before the storm, the very elements and events will fight against them, indignation and shameful repulse will burn after them to the valleys of the Alps—Lombardy will renew the league against the Imperial power which once was so successful, and as the last and greatest consummation, Germany itself will wrest from its oppressors a power confided to them under stipulations which, after having

performance in the theatre at Pisa with Mary and Clare. Mary, who had heard him several times, writes in her journal on the preceding day, 'Go to the theatre and hear the Improvise of Sgricci—a most wonderful and delightful exhibition. He poured forth a torrent of poetry clothed in the most beautiful language,' Clare shared Mary's enthusiasm, but Shelley, who was at first an admirer of Sgricci's gifts, afterwards modified his opinion of the improvvisatore.—Dowden's "Life of Shelley," Vol. II, pp. 359, 366.

assumed, they refused to carry into effect. . . . You have seen or heard, I suppose, of the note sent by the British Ministry to the Allied sovereigns. Even the unprincipled Castlereagh dared not join them against Naples, and ventured to condemn the principles of their alliance ; saying as much as to forbid them to touch Spain or Portugal. . . . If the Austrians meet with any serious check—they may as well at once retire, for the good spirit of the World is out against them.—If they march to Naples at once, let us hide our heads in sorrow, for our hopes of political good are vain.

My dearest girl, I wish you would contrive some means of causing the Petition of Emilia to be presented to the Grand-Duchess. I have engaged that I will procure its presentation, and although perhaps we may conceive little hope from the application, there is yet the possibility of success.—She made *me* write the Petition for her, though she could have done it a thousand times better herself ; for she has written to the Princess Rospigliosi to entreat her to second the prayer of the petition in a manner that I am persuaded must produce some effect—it is so impressive and pathetic.—The Petition is the very reverse—but these affairs are less determined by words than by facts—would Bojti present it ? No, that is not good. Could you ask Madame Martini to do so, or Madame Orlandini ? Pray do something for me about this, otherwise I must come to Florence, which does not suit me in any manner.

Del Rosso I have not yet seen. I was to have gone to Leghorn yesterday, but Williams, who is to accompany me, was obliged to stay till to-day.—I will write of it from that place.

What pleasure it gives me to hear that you are well ! health is the greatest possession, health of body and mind—as the writer, weak enough in both, too well knows.—Tell me particularly how you get on with your Italian friends—study German—I will give you a dictionary if I can find one at Leghorn. “ Be strong, live happy, and love,” says Milton. Adieu, dear girl—confide, and persuade yourself

of my eternal and tender regard. Yours with deepest affection,

S.

Keats is very ill at Naples<sup>1</sup>—I have written to him to ask him to come to Pisa, without however inviting him into our own house. We are not rich enough for that sort of thing. Poor fellow!—I am provoked at Sgricci's assumption, and shall certainly never allow him to make the use you allude to of me.

(On the same paper of this letter may be read the cancelled words in Shelley's handwriting—

MY DEAR KEATS,

I learn this moment that you are at Naples, and that . . .).

[Addressed outside],

MISS CLAIRMONT,

Presso al Sigr. Profe. BOJTI,

Dirimpetto Palazzo Pitti,

Firenze.

### 398. TO CHARLES OLLIER

(London)

PISA,

Feb[ruary] 22, 1821.

DEAR SIR,

Peacock's essay is at Florence at present. I have sent for it, and will transmit to you my paper [on Poetry]<sup>2</sup> as soon as it is written, which will be in a very few days. Nevertheless, I should be sorry that you delayed your magazine through any dependence on me. I will not accept anything for this paper, as I had determined to write it, and promised it you, before I heard of your liberal arrangements; but perhaps in future, if I think I have any thoughts worth publishing, I shall be glad to contribute

<sup>1</sup> John Keats died at Rome on the night of February 23, 1821, five days after the date of this letter, in a house now constituting a Keats-Shelley Memorial, in the Piazza di Spagna.

<sup>2</sup> Shelley's "Defence of Poetry" (see next letter and pp. 846, 859).

to your magazine on those terms. Meanwhile, you are perfectly at liberty to publish the "Ode to Naples," the sonnet, or any short piece you may have of mine.

I suppose "Julian and Maddalo" is published. If not, do not add the "Witch of Atlas" to that peculiar piece of writing; you may put my name to the "Witch of Atlas," as usual. The piece I last sent you, I wish, as I think I told you, to be printed immediately, and that anonymously. I should be very glad to receive a few copies of it by the box, but I am unwilling that it should be any longer delayed.

I doubt about "Charles the First;"<sup>1</sup> but, if I do write it, it shall be the birth of severe and high feelings. You are very welcome to it, on the terms you mention, and, when once I see and feel that I can write it, it is already written. My thoughts aspire to a production of a far higher character; but the execution of it will require some years. I write what I write chiefly to inquire, by the reception which my writings meet with, how far I am fit for so great a task, or not. And I am afraid that your account will not present me with a very flattering result in this particular.

You may expect to hear from me within a week, with the answer to Peacock. I shall endeavour to treat the subject in its elements, and unveil the inmost idol of the error.

If any Review of note abuses me excessively, or the contrary, be so kind as to send it me by post.

If not too late, pray send me by the box the following books: The most copious and correct history of the discoveries of Geology. If one publication does not appear to contain what I require, send me two or three. A history of the late war in Spain; I think one has been written by Southey.<sup>2</sup> Major *Somebody's* account of the siege of

<sup>1</sup> A fragment of this play was published in Shelley's "Posthumous Poems," 1824; it was never completed.

<sup>2</sup> Southey's "History of the Peninsular War" was not published until 1823-32.

Zaragosa ; it is a little pamphlet. Burnet's " History of his Own Times," and the " Old English Drama," 3 vols.

Excuse my horrible pens, ink, and paper. I can get no pen that will mark ; or, if you will not excuse them, send me out some English ones.

I am delighted to hear of Procter's success, and hope that he will proceed gathering laurels. Pray tell me how the " Prometheus Unbound " was received.

Dear Sir,

YOUR very obliged servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

399. TO CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

PISA,

March 20, 1821.

DEAR SIR,

I send you the " Defence of Poetry," Part I. It is transcribed, I hope, legibly.

I have written nothing which I do not think necessary to the subject. Of course, if any expressions should strike you as too unpopular, I give you the power of omitting them ; but I trust you will, if possible, refrain from exercising it. In fact, I hope that I have treated the question with that temper and spirit as to silence cavil. I propose to add two other parts in two succeeding Miscellanies. It is to be understood that, although you may omit, you do not alter or add.

Pray let me hear from you soon.

Dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

P. B. S.

## 400. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

PISA,

March 21, 1821.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I dispatch by this post the first part of an essay, intended to consist of three parts, which I design for an antidote to your "Four Ages of Poetry."<sup>1</sup> You will see that I have taken a more general view of what is poetry than you have, and will perhaps agree with several of my positions, without considering your own touched. But read and judge; and do not let us imitate the great founders of the picturesque, Price and Payne Knight, who, like two ill-trained beagles, began snarling at each other when they could not catch the hare.<sup>2</sup>

I hear the welcome news of a box from England announced by Mr. Gisborne. How much new poetry does it contain? The Bavi and Mævi of the day are fertile; and I wish those who honour me with boxes would read and inwardly digest your "Four Ages of Poetry;"

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<sup>1</sup> "The 'Four Ages of Poetry' here alluded to was published in Ollier's *Literary Miscellany*. Shelley wrote the 'Defence of Poetry' as an answer to it; and as he wrote it, it contained many allusions to the article and its author, such as 'If I know the knight by the device of his shield, I have only to inscribe Cassandra, Antigone, or Alcestis on mine to blunt the point of his spear;' taking one instance of a favourite character from each of the three great Greek tragedians. All these allusions were struck out by Mr. John Hunt when he prepared the paper for publication in the *Liberal*. The demise of that periodical prevented the publication, and Mrs. Shelley subsequently printed it from Mr. Hunt's *risfacciamento*, as she received it. The paper as it now stands is a defence without an attack. Shelley intended this paper to be in three parts, but the other two were not written."—T. L. Peacock's note.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Uvedale Price (1747-1829), who was the author of several books on landscape-gardening, among which was "An Essay on the Picturesque," 1774, engaged in a controversy with Repton on the subject of taste in landscape. Richard Payne Knight (1750-1824) numismatist and author, wrote a didactic poem entitled "The Landscape," 1794, also a "Review of the Landscape," and an "Essay on the Picturesque with practical remarks on Rural Ornament," 1795.

for I had much rather, for my own private reading, receive political, geological, and moral treatises, than this stuff in *terza*, *ottava*, and *tremilesima rima*, whose earthly baseness has attracted the lightning of your indiscriminating censure upon the temple of immortal song. Procter's verses enrage me far more than those of Codrus did Juvenal, and with better reason. Juvenal need not have been stunned, unless he had liked it ; but my boxes are packed with this trash, to the exclusion of what I want to see. But your box will make amends.

We are surrounded here in Pisa by revolutionary volcanos which as yet give more light than heat : the lava has not yet reached Tuscany. But the news in the papers will tell you far more than it is prudent for me to say ; and for this once I will observe your rule of political silence. The Austrians wish that the Neapolitans and Piedmontese would do the same.

Do you see much of Hogg now ? and the Boinvilles (?) and Co[u]lson ? Hunt I suppose not. And are you occupied as much as ever ? We have seen a few more people than usual this winter, and have made a very interesting acquaintance with a Greek Prince,<sup>1</sup> perfectly acquainted with ancient literature, and full of enthusiasm for the liberties and improvement of his country. Mary

<sup>1</sup> Prince Alexander Mavrocordato was afterwards one of the most prominent patriots in the Greek struggle for independence. Mrs. Shelley says of him in her note to "Hellas": "We had formed the acquaintance at Pisa of several Constantinopolitan Greeks, of the family of Prince Caradji, formerly Hospodar of Wallachia, who, hearing that the bowstring, the accustomed finale of his viceroyalty, was on the road to him, escaped with his treasures, and took up his abode in Tuscany. Among these was the gentleman [Mavrocordato] to whom the drama of 'Hellas' was dedicated. Prince Mavrocordato was warmed by those aspirations for the independence of his country, which filled the hearts of many of his countrymen. He often intimated the possibility of an insurrection in Greece ; but we had no idea of its being so near at hand, when, on the 1st of April, 1821, he called on Shelley, bringing the proclamation of his cousin, Prince Ipsilanti, and, radiant with exultation and delight, declared that henceforth Greece would be free."

has been a Greek student several months, and is reading "Antigone" with our turbaned friend, who in return is taught English. Clare has passed the carnival at Florence, and has been preternaturally gay. I have had a severe ophthalmia, and have read or written little this winter; and have made acquaintance in an obscure convent with the only Italian for whom I ever felt any interest.<sup>1</sup>

I want you to do something for me: that is, to get me £2's worth of Tassie's gems, in Leicester Square, the prettiest according to your taste; among them, the head of Alexander; and to get me two seals engraved and set, one smaller, and the other handsomer: the device a dove with outspread wings, and this motto round it—

*Μάντις εἰμ' ἐσθλῶν ἀγώνων.*

Mary desires her best regards, and I remain, my dear Peacock, ever most sincerely yours,

P. B. S.

[Peacock says "there is a postscript from Mrs. Shelley, asking me to execute one or two small commissions :) "Also, if you will be so kind, 4 skeins of white netting silk—2 green and 2 crimson—all of a size fit for purses. You will send them to Ollier with the seals, etc., if his parcel is not yet dispatched—if it is have the goodness to send them as soon as you can by some other opportunity," [and adding]—

Am I not lucky to have got so good a master? I have finished the two of "Œdipi," and very soon the "Antigone," the name of the Prince is *Αλέξανδρος Μαυροκόρδατος*. He can read English perfectly well.

401. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT

(Florence)

(Written by Mary Shelley)

*Ὑψιλάντι Τψηλάντι*

[PISA,

April 2, 1821.]

MY DEAR CLARE,

Greece has declared its freedom! Prince Mavrocordato

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<sup>1</sup> Emilia Viviani, the subject of his "Epipsychidion."



has made us expect this event for some weeks past. Yesterday, he came *rayonnant de joie*—he had been ill for some days, but he forgot all his pains. Ipselanti, a Greek general in the service of Russia, has collected together 10,000 Greeks and entered Wallachia, declaring the liberty of his country. The Morea—Epirus—Servia are in revolt. Greece will most certainly be free. The worst part of this news to us is that our amiable prince will leave us—he will of course join his countrymen as soon as possible—never did man appear so happy—yet he sacrifices family—fortune—everything to the hope of freeing his country. Such men are repaid—such succeed. You may conceive the deep sympathy that we feel with his joy on this occasion : tinged as it must be with anxiety for success—made serious by the knowledge of the blood that must be shed on this occasion. What a delight it will be to visit Greece free.

April has opened with weather truly heavenly—after a whole week of libcccio—rain and wind, it is delightful to enjoy one of these days peculiar to Italy in this early season—the clear sky, animating sun and fresh yet not cold breeze—just that delicious season when pleasant thoughts bring sad ones to the mind ;<sup>1</sup> when every sensation seems to make a double effect, and every moment of the day is divided, felt and counted. One is not gay—at least I am not—but peaceful and at peace with all the world.

I write you a short letter to-day but I could not resist the temptation of acquainting you with the changes in Greece, the moment Prince Mavrocordato gave us leave to mention it.

I hope that your spirits will get better with this favourable change of weather—Florence must be perfectly delightful. Send the white paint as soon as you can, and

<sup>1</sup> “ In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts  
Bring sad thoughts to the mind.”

—Wordsworth’s “ Lines written in Early Spring.”

two *striscie*'s for me. Shelley says that he will finish this letter. We hear from no one in England.

Ever yours,

M. W. S.

[*Shelley continues the same letter*]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I hope you have somewhat recovered your spirits since you last wrote to me ; if so, pray tell me, as it makes me very melancholy to hear that you are so much depressed. The weather is a medicine for almost any dejection which does not spring from a naturally imperfect or deranged frame. My health is very fluctuating and uncertain, and change of season brings a change rather than a relief of ills. I live, however, for certain intoxicating moments, which are the " ounces of sweets that outweigh a pound of sour," and which no person deprived of memory need despair of possessing.

Tell me what you mean to do on the 20th and how are your prospects with the Princess ? Naples will be no place to visit at present, and you are much deceived by those who surround you if you imagine that the success of the Austrians in that country has terminated the war in Italy. *We* are yet undecided for the summer—say something to fix our determination. The Catholic Emancipation has passed the second reading by a majority of 11 in 497. This will give the Government a momentary strength. Pray order Calderon for me without delay and try if you can urge the bookseller to some sort of speed.

Pray don't imagine that the trees upon the letter you sent to Mary are my manufacture—I disclaim such daubs, and I had hoped that you knew my style too well to impute them to me. The love-letters themselves do not seem to have been meant for you.<sup>1</sup> Is there no other Clara

<sup>1</sup> "Clare notes in her journal: 'February 17.—A ridiculous anonymous love-letter from Pisa.' 'March 17.—A second anonymous love-letter from Pisa.' In one of her note-books she writes

Clairmont but the one to whom I declare myself the  
constant and affectionate friend, S. ?

[The drawing of a tree follows with the words] "That is  
my style."

[Addressed outside],

MISS CLAIRMONT,

Presso al Prof. BOJTI,

Dirimpetto Palazzo Pitti,

Firenze.

402. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT  
(Florence)

April 13, 1821,

FRIDAY MOR[NING].

MY BEST AND DEAREST GIRL,

How excessively grieved I am that I have made you  
share our false alarm! The whole business merely consists  
in the omission of the payment of £30 to Hume, and that  
rascal Longdill having taken out an order against my whole  
income—a mistake remedied as quickly as known. I shall  
send you the money for the ensuing month directly.<sup>1</sup>

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of herself, 'In 1818, she refused an offer of marriage from P——; he knew her whole history. In 1820, she tried to like Mr. Reveley, who made her an offer of marriage, but she found that she could not, and refused him.'"—Prof. Dowden's note.

<sup>1</sup> On March 28, 1821, Horace Smith, who had undertaken the management of Shelley's money matters in London, wrote to say that his bankers "had received notice not to advance anything more on your account, as the payments to them would in future be discontinued; but they could give me no information why this alteration had occurred, or whether you were apprised of it." Shelley received this letter on April 11, and two days later learnt the reason for his banker's statement. It was his custom to leave thirty pounds every quarter at his bankers for the maintenance of his children who were in the charge of Dr. Hume. This sum had not been paid, either owing to the absence of Shelley's order or from some other circumstance, and probably Dr. Hume applied to Shelley's attorney, who, with Sir Timothy's attorney, contrived to put the case into Chancery and a suit was commenced. Horace Smith, however, with his friendly interest in Shelley's affairs, set the matter right. Shelley's letter to Dr. Hume of Feb. 17, 1820, is

Our fright was not small; for we could not conjecture the truth. Whatever I have or have not, however, is dear to me in possession chiefly as an instrument of your peace and independence.

Good-bye, dear, yours ever affectionately,  
S.

[Addressed outside],  
Pisso al Prof. BOJTI,  
Piazza Pitti,  
Firenze.

#### 403. TO HENRY REVELEY

PISA,  
TUESDAY, 1 o'clock, 17 April, 1821.

MY DEAR HENRY,

Our ducking last night has added fire, instead of quenching the nautical ardour which produced it; and I consider it a good omen in any enterprise, that it begins in evil; as being more probable that it will end in good.<sup>1</sup> I hope *you* have not suffered from it. I am rather feverish, but very well as to the side, whence I expected the worst consequences. I send you directions for the complete equipment of our boat, since you have kindly promised to undertake it. In putting into execution, a little more or less expense in so trifling an affair is to be disregarded. I need not say that the approaching season invites expedition. You can put her in hand immediately, and write the day on which we may come for her.

We expect with impatience the arrival of our false friends,<sup>2</sup> who have so long cheated us with delay; and Mary unites

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misdated, as it appears to be for 1821, evidently relates to this affair. From this letter it would seem that Shelley, having forgotten to pay the previous quarterly allowance when it became due, wrote to acknowledge the omission; and had Dr. Hume applied to Horace Smith, the difficulty would never have arisen.

<sup>1</sup> See Shelley's account of this accident in his letter to Clare of April 29, 1821, p. 869.

<sup>2</sup> The Gisbornes arrived at Pisa on Thursday, April 26.

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with me in desiring, that, as *you* participated equally in the crime, you should not be omitted in the expiation.

All good be with you.—Adieu.

Yours faithfully,

S.

Williams desires to be kindly remembered to you, and begs to present his compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne, and—heaven knows what.

404. TO HENRY REVELEY

PISA,

April 19, [1821].

MY DEAR HENRY,

The rullock, or place for the oar, ought not to be placed where the oar-pins are now, but ought to be nearer to the mast; as near as possible, indeed, so that the rower has room to sit. In addition let a false keel be made in this shape, so as to be four inches deep at the stern, and to decrease towards the prow. It may be as thin as you please.

Tell Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne that I have read the "*Numancia*,"<sup>1</sup> and after wading through the singular stupidity of the first act, began to be greatly delighted, and, at length, interested in a very high degree, by the power of the writer in awakening pity and admiration, in which I hardly know by whom he is excelled. There is little, I allow, in a strict sense, to be called *poetry* in this play; but the command of language, and the harmony of versification, is so great as to deceive one into an idea that it is poetry.

Adieu.—We shall see you soon,

Yours very truly,

S.

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<sup>1</sup> By Cervantes.

405. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT  
(Florence)

SUNDAY [April 29, 1821.] <sup>1</sup>

MY DEAREST CLARE,

It is not for want of interest in your plans and feelings, that I have not written to you ; but imagining that Mary managed the *rude stuff*, the mass of the correspondence ; and not knowing that I had anything peculiar to say to you,

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<sup>1</sup> On March 15, 1821, Clare had written in her diary that Allegra had been sent to a convent at Bagnacavallo. She strongly disapproved of this convent education for her child, and pleaded in vain against Byron's decision. "Although," as Prof. Dowden says, "Shelley deplored any circumstance that should contribute to Clare's unhappiness, after consulting with Mary he did not hesitate, when writing to Byron, to uphold his decision." This letter of Shelley's is not available, but the subjects discussed by him are alluded to by Byron in his reply—

BYRON TO SHELLEY

RAVENNA,

April 26, 1821.

The child continues doing well, and the accounts are regular and favourable. It is gratifying to me that you and Mrs. Shelley do not disapprove of the step which I have taken, which is merely temporary.

I am very sorry to hear what you say of Keats—is it *actually* true ? I did not think criticism had been so killing. Though I differ from you essentially in your estimate of his performances, I so much abhor all unnecessary pain, that I would rather he had been seated on the highest peak of Parnassus than have perished in such a manner. Poor fellow ! though with such inordinate self-love he would probably have not been very happy. I read the review of "Endymion" in the *Quarterly*. It was severe,—but surely not so severe as many reviews in that and other journals upon others.

I recollect the effect upon me of the *Edinburgh* on my first poem ; it was rage, and resistance, and redress—but not despondency nor despair. I grant that those are not amiable feelings ; but, in this world of bustle and broil, and especially in the career of writing, a man should calculate upon his powers of *resistance* before he goes into the arena.

"Expect not life from pain nor danger free,

Nor deem the doom of man reversed for thee."

You know my opinion of that *second-hand* school of poetry,—because it is of *no* school. I read "Cenci"—but, besides that I think the *subject* essentially *undramatic*, I am not an admirer of our old dramatists as *models*. I deny that the English have hitherto

I had kept the silence of one to whom letters and indeed communications of any kind, are either a great pain or a great pleasure. So far have I been from neglecting you in my thoughts, that I have lately had with Mrs. Mason long and serious conversations respecting your situation and prospects; conversations too long, too important, and embracing too various a complication of views to detail in a letter.—You can perhaps guess at some of them. I am most anxious to know your expectations and determinations at Florence. Whatever these may be, either there or elsewhere, believe that no view which I can take of any plan you may determine on will be influenced by anything else than a consideration of *your own* ultimate advantage. I feel, my dear girl, that in case the failure of your expectations at Florence should induce you to adopt other plans, *we*, that is you and I, ought to have a conversation together.

My health is in general much the same; somewhat amended by the divine weather that has fallen upon us, but still characterized by irritability and depression; or moments of almost supernatural elevation of spirits. My side begins, however, to feel the influence of the relaxing year. I think I have been better altogether this winter;

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had a drama at all. Your "Cenci," however, was a work of power, and poetry. As to *my* drama, pray revenge yourself upon it, by being as free as I have been with yours.

I have not yet got your "Prometheus," which I long to see. I have heard nothing of mine, and do not know that it is yet published. I have published a pamphlet on the Pope controversy, which you will not like. Had I known that Keats was dead—or that he was alive and so sensitive—I should have omitted some remarks upon his poetry, to which I was provoked by his *attack* upon *Pope*, and my disapprobation of *his own* style of writing.

You want me to undertake a great poem—I have not the inclination nor the power. As I grow older, the indifference—*not* to life, for we love it by instinct—but to the stimuli of life, increases. Besides, this late failure of the Italians has latterly disappointed me for many reasons, —some public, some personal. My respects to Mrs. S.

Yours ever, B.

P.S.—Could not you and I contrive to meet this summer? Could not you take a run here *alone*?

I wish to think so, in spite of the strong motives which should impel me to desire to exist under another form. I have bought a boat, which Williams overturned the first evening by taking hold of the top of the mast;—as you might any boat under a sloop of war. I expect that the exercise of sailing, etc., will do good to my health; I have bought it instead of a horse, which Vaccà<sup>1</sup> recommended, but which would cost more money, spirits, time, trouble, and care than I have to expend conveniently. Henry Reveley has got her now at Leghorn to paint and refit; and she will be a very nice little shell for the Nautilus, your friend . . . who has enough to do in taming his own will, without the additional burthen of regulating that of a horse, and still worse of a groom. The Gisbornes are going to England. They have been here for two days on a visit proposed by themselves, and return to-morrow. My manners to them have been gentle, but cold.

Not a word of the Steamboat, in fact my money seems to be as irretrievable as Henry's character, and it is fortunate that I value it as little. I do not write anything at present. I feel incapable of composition.

I believe it is now certain that Emilia will marry, although it is undecided whom.—A great and a painful weight will be taken off my mind by the event. Poor thing! she suffers dreadfully in her prison.

Adieu. Your affectionate friend,

S.

*I Mantuan, capering, squalid, squalling*—a verse of Mr. T[aafe]'s<sup>2</sup> translation of Dante.

[Addressed outside],

Miss CLAIRMONT,

Presso al Profe. BOJTI,

Dirimpetto Palazzo Pitti, Florence.

<sup>1</sup> André Vaccà Berlinghiera (1772-1826), the physician at Pisa who had an European reputation, and whom Shelley had consulted with regard to his health, had received a part of his medical education in England.

<sup>2</sup> John Taaffe ("Count" Taaffe, as he was sometimes called) was an Irishman and a Knight Commander of the Order of St. John



406. TO A LADY<sup>1</sup>

[Exact date unknown.]? Spring, 1821.

"It is probable that you will be earnest to employ the sacred talisman of language. To acquire these you are now necessitated to sacrifice many hours of the time, when, instead of being conversant with particles and verbs, your nature incites you to contemplation and inquiry concerning the objects which they conceal. You desire to enjoy the beauties of eloquence and poetry—to sympathise in the original language with the institutors and martyrs of ancient freedom. The generous and inspiring examples of philosophy and virtue, you desire intimately to know and feel; not as mere facts detailing names, and dates, and motions of the human body, but clothed in the very language of the actors,—that language dictated by and expressive of the passions and principles that governed their conduct. Facts are not what we want to know in poetry, in history, in the lives of individual men, in satire,

of Jerusalem, who contributed the comic element to Shelley's Pisan circle. He was self-constituted poet-laureate of Pisa, and was sometimes the butt of Byron's wit, who however called him "really a good fellow," and introduced him to John Murray, who published in 1822 "A Comment on the Divine Comedy of Dante," the first volume of which Taaffe had caused to be printed (anonymously) at Pisa, like Shelley's "Adonais," "with the types of Didot." See Shelley's letter to Ollier, June 16, 1821. Taaffe was also the author of "Aclais," a poem in 2 vols., privately printed in 1852, and "The History of the Holy, Military Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem," 4 vols., 1852. It was he who was the cause of the affair with the dragoon in March, 1822. See p. 948.

<sup>1</sup> This fragment was printed by Mrs. Shelley as a note to the letter to John Gisborne of Nov. 16, 1819, with the following note—

"I subjoin here a fragment of a letter, I know not to whom addressed; it is to a woman—which shows how, worshipping as Shelley did the spirit of the literature of ancient Greece, he considered that this could be found only in its original language, and did not consider that time wasted which a person who had pretensions, intellectual culture, and enthusiasm, spent in acquiring them."

Mr. H. Buxton Forman suggests that the recipient, or intended recipient, may have been Miss Clairmont.

or panegyric. They are the mere divisions, the arbitrary points on which we hang, and to which we refer those delicate and evanescent hues of mind, which language delights and instructs us in precise proportion as it expresses. What is a translation of Homer into English? A person who is ignorant of Greek need only look at "Paradise Lost," or the tragedy of "Lear" translated into French, to obtain an analogical conception of its worthless and miserable inadequacy. Tacitus, or Livius, or Herodotus, are equally undelightful and uninformative in translation. You require to know and to be intimate with those persons who have acted a distinguished part to benefit, to enlighten, or even to pervert and injure humankind. Before you can do this, four years are yet to be consumed in the discipline of the ancient languages, and those of modern Europe, which you only imperfectly know, and which conceal from your intimacy such names as Ariosto, Tasso, Petrarch, and Macchiavelli; or Goëthe, Schiller, Wieland, etc. The French language you, like every other respectable woman, already know; and if the great name of Rousseau did not redeem it, it would have been perhaps as well that you had remained entirely ignorant of it."

407. TO JOHN AND MARIA GISBORNE

BAGNĀ,  
TUESDAY EVENING,  
(June 5, 1821).

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

We anxiously expect your arrival at the Baths; but as I am persuaded that you will spend as much time with us as you can save from your necessary occupations before your departure, I will forbear to vex you with importunity. My health does not permit me to spend many hours from home. I have been engaged these last days in composing

a poem<sup>1</sup> on the death of Keats, which will shortly be finished; and I anticipate the pleasure of reading it to you, as some of the very few persons who will be interested in it and understand it. It is a highly-wrought *piece of art*, and perhaps better, in point of composition, than anything I have written.

I have obtained a purchaser for some of the articles of your three lists, a catalogue of which I subjoin. I shall do my utmost to get more; could you not send me a complete list of your *furniture*, as I have had inquiries made about chests of drawers, etc.

My unfortunate box! it contained a chaos of the elements of "Charles I." If the idea of the *creator*<sup>2</sup> had been packed up with them, it would have shared the same fate; and that, I am afraid, has undergone another sort of shipwreck.

Very faithfully and affectionately yours,

S.

408. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT

(Florence)

Pisa,

June 8, 1821.

MY DEAR CLARE,

I have just seen Mrs. Mason, who desires me on your part not to take further steps about your lodgings at Livorno:

<sup>1</sup> "Adonais / An elegy on the death of John Keats, / Author of Endymion, Hyperion, etc. / By / Percy B. Shelley / Quotation from Plato / Pisa / with the Types of Didot / MDCCCXXI." In an undated and unpublished letter to Ollier, probably written at the end of June or the beginning of July, 1821, Shelley states the copies of "Adonais" are already on their way to Ollier, and that he is sending a sketch for a frontispiece to the poem, which he desires shall be engraved at once as he wishes it to be ready when the poem arrives.

<sup>2</sup> Professor Dowden has suggested as probable that this reference alludes to an ambitious poetical work in contemplation by Shelley entitled "The Creator." Mary also mentions to Mr. and Mrs. Gisborne on June 30, that "The 'Creator' has not yet made himself heard."

I accordingly stay all further proceedings until further orders.—Indeed you would be very uncomfortable there alone, or in the society of those odious people, the dregs of the Livornese merchants, who sell board and lodging on such terms as are by no means large enough to include the increased appetite that sea-bathing would give you. If you can go with Madame Orlandini pray do. The Gisbornes I told you are going to England and are selling all their goods, and mine too. I wonder how much they will have the face to offer me as the produce of the wreck of the steanboat. We shall see. I shall pounce upon their German dictionary for you ; as the order I transmitted to Peacock for one, has been like all my other orders totally neglected. My health is better since I last wrote. I always tell you it is better, and yet I am never well. I have a great desire and interest to live, and I would submit to any inconvenience to attain that object. I take all sorts of care of myself, but it *appears* to make no difference. Anything that prevents me from thinking does me good. Reading does not occupy me enough : the only relief I find springs from the composition of poetry, which necessitates contemplations that lift me above the stormy mist of sensations which are my habitual place of abode. I have lately been composing a poem on Keats ; it is better than anything that I have yet written, and worthy both of him and of me.

We never hear from England now. Godwin writes no more.

Peacock writes no more. Hunt wrote about three months ago, in a strain, however, which gave me pain, because I see he is struggling. Miss Curran wrote the other day inviting herself to spend the summer with us, but Mary sent an excuse. We see a good deal of the Williamses, who are very good people, and I like her much better than I did. Mr. Taaffe comes sometimes, and on an occasion of sending two guinea pigs to Mary wrote this at the end of his letter—

"O, that I were one of those guinea pigs, that I might see you this morning!"

A vessel has arrived to take the Greek Prince and his suite to join the army in Morea. He is a great loss to Mary and *therefore* to me . . . but not otherwise.

Adieu. I will send you the rest of your money in a day or two.

Ever truly and affectionately yours,  
S.

P.S.—Untreue trift seinen eignen Herrn.

[Addressed outside],

Miss CLAIRMONT,

Presso al Prof. BOJTI,

Dirimpetto Palazzo Pitti,

Firenze.

#### 409. TO CHARLES OLLIER

(London)

PISA,

June 8, 1821.

DEAR SIR,

You may announce for publication a poem entitled "Adonais." It is a lament on the death of poor Keats, with some interposed stabs on the assassins of his peace and of his fame; and will be preceded by a criticism on "Hyperion," asserting the due claims which that fragment gives him to the rank which I have assigned him. My poem is finished, and consists of about forty Spenser stanzas. I shall send it you, either printed at Pisa, or transcribed in such a manner as it shall be difficult for the reviser to leave such errors as *assist* the obscurity of the "Prometheus." But, in case I send it printed, it will be merely that mistakes may be avoided; [so] that I shall only have a few copies struck off in the cheapest manner.

If you have interest enough in the subject, I could wish that you inquired of some of the friends and relations of Keats respecting the circumstances of his death, and could

transmit me any information you may be able to collect, and especially as to the degree in which, as I am assured, the brutal attack in the *Quarterly Review* excited the disease by which he perished.

I have received no answer to my last letter to you. Have you received my contribution to your magazine?

Dear Sir,

Yours very sincerely,

P. B. SHELLEY.

410. TO CHARLES OLLIER

(London)

June 11, 1821.

DEAR SIR,

I hear that a bookseller of the name of Clark has published a poem which I wrote in early youth, called "Queen Mab."<sup>1</sup> I have not seen it for some years, but inasmuch as I recollect

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<sup>1</sup> This reprint of "Queen Mab," which was published by W. Clark, 201 Strand, bears the date of 1821. The notes in Greek, Latin, and French are printed with translations, and in many copies the dedication to Harriet is to be found. Shelley's application for an injunction was refused on the ground that "the work being calculated to do injury to society had ceased to be the property of its author." In the first collected edition of Shelley's poetical works, published in 1839, Mary Shelley included "Queen Mab," with certain omissions from the poem and notes. These omissions were made at the request of Moxon, the publisher, but while the book was going through the press Mary Shelley sought the advice of Leigh Hunt in the following letter, which is now published for the first time: "41 Park Street, December 12, 1838. My dear Hunt,—I am about to publish an edition of our Shelley's Poems, Sir Tim giving leave if there is no biography. I want a copy of the original edition of 'Queen Mab' to correct the press from—it must be the *original*—it would not go to the Printers but only [be] used to correct from. Have you one—or do you know who has—Has Miss Kent? I should be so grateful for the loan. Moxon wants me to leave out the sixth part as too atheistical. I don't like Atheism—nor does he *now*. Yet I hate mutilation—what do you say? How have you been, and when does your Play come out? With love to Marianne. Yours ever. M. W. Shelley. Let me have the book quickly—if you have it—as the press is waiting." In the one volume royal octavo

it is villainous trash ; and I dare say much better fitted to injure than to serve the cause which it advocates. In the name of poetry, and as you are a bookseller (you observe the strength of these conjurations) pray give all manner of publicity to my disapprobation of this publication ; in fact protest for me in an advertisement in the strongest terms—I ought to say, however, that I am obliged to this piratical fellow in one respect : that he has omitted, with a delicacy for which I thank him heartily, a foolish dedication to my late wife, the publication of which would have annoyed me ; and indeed is the only part of the business that could seriously have annoyed me—although it is my duty to protest against the whole. I have written to my attorney to do what he can to suppress it, although I fear that, after the precedent of Southey,<sup>1</sup> there is little probability of an injunction being granted.

I hear that the abuse against me exceeds all bounds. Pray, if you see any one article particularly outrageous, send it me. As yet I have laughed ; but woe to these scoundrels if they should once make me lose my temper. I have discovered that my calumniator in the *Quarterly Review* was the Rev. Mr. Milman. Priests and eunuchs have their privilege.<sup>2</sup>

"Adonais" is finished and you will soon receive it. It is little adapted for popularity, but is perhaps the least imperfect of my compositions.

Dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

P. B. SHELLEY.

edition of Shelley's Poems, apparently published the year following (1840)—although the engraved title-page bears the date 1839—"Queen Mab," with the notes, is published exactly as Shelley printed it in 1813.

<sup>1</sup> Southey's revolutionary drama, "Wat Tyler," written, but not published in 1794, had been issued surreptitiously in 1817. The author's attempt to suppress this publication by an injunction was unsuccessful.

<sup>2</sup> Milman was not the author of the article. See p. 728.

## 410A. TO CHARLES OLLIER

[PISA],

June 16, 1821.

(Fragment)

*[With this letter Shelley sent a specimen of Taaffe's "Comment" on, and translation of, Dante's "Divine Comedy," which had been printed at Pisa "with the types of Didot," inviting Ollier to arrange with its author for its publication in England. In another letter to Ollier, written about this time, Shelley refers to the "Comment"; he is a little more outspoken about the translated portion of the work. See note on p. 869.]*

" . . . The more considerable portion of this work will consist of the "Comment." I have read with much attention this portion, as well as the verses up to the end of the eighth canto ; and I do not hesitate to assure you that the lights which the annotator's labours have thrown on the obscurer parts of the text are such as all foreigners and most Italians would derive an immense additional knowledge of Dante from. They elucidate a great number of the most interesting facts connected with Dante's history and the history of his times, and everywhere bear the mark of a most elegant and accomplished mind. I know that you will not take my opinion on poetry, because I thought my own verses very good, and *you* find that the public declare them to be unreadable. Show them to Mr. Procter, who is far better qualified to judge than I am ; there are certainly passages of great strength and conciseness ; indeed, the author has sacrificed everything to represent his original truly in this latter point. Pray observe the beauty of the typography ; they are the same types that my "Elegy on Keats" is printed from.

## 411. TO JOHN GISBORNE

PISA,

Saturday, June 16, 1821.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have received the heart-rending account of the closing



scene of the great genius whom envy and ingratitude scourged out of the world. I do not think that if I had seen it before, I could have composed my poem. The enthusiasm of the imagination would have overpowered the sentiment.

As it is, I have finished my Elegy ; and this day I send it to the press at Pisa. You shall have a copy the moment it is completed. I think it will please you. I have dipped my pen in consuming fire for his destroyers ; otherwise the style is calm and solemn.

Pray, when shall we see you ? Or are the streams of Helicon less salutary than sea-bathing for the nerves ? Give us as much as you can before you go to England, and rather divide the term than not come soon.

Mrs. — wishes that none of the books, desk, etc., should be packed up with the piano ; but that they should be sent, one by one, by Pepi. Address them to *me* at her house. She desired me to have them addressed to *me*, why I know not.

A droll circumstance has occurred. "Queen Mab," a poem written by me when very young, in the most furious style, with long notes against Jesus Christ, and God the Father, and the King, and bishops, and marriage, and the devil knows what, is just published by one of the low booksellers in the Strand, against my wish and consent, and all the people are at loggerheads about it. Horace Smith gives me this account. You may imagine how much I am amused. For the sake of a dignified appearance, however, and really because I wish to protest against all the bad poetry in it, I have given orders to say that it is all done against my desire, and have directed my attorney to apply to Chancery for an injunction, which he will not get.

I am pretty ill, I thank you ; just now ; but I hope you are better.

Most affectionately yours,

P. B. S.

412. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT  
(Florence)

PISA,

Saturday [Postmark: June 19, 1821].

MY DEAREST CLARE,

Have you made your mind up where you would live this summer? or is there anything new in your plans? I hear from you but seldom now you cease to correspond with Mary.

Horace Smith is coming out to Italy immediately. He requests me to discover for him in or near Florence a house fit for a very small establishment, with a garden; large enough for a family in all of seven or eight persons. He wishes also to get an *Italian woman, good cook, who speaks French*; this last I apprehend to be impossible. You know how much I wish to do my utmost in executing all Horace Smith's commissions; and I thought of coming to Florence, though it would be a great waste both of money and of health to me, for that purpose. But perhaps you could manage these affairs; of course the house will not be taken until he comes, and will be subject to his approbation. I imagine he wishes it to be unfurnished, and he is the sort of man to like a pretty, elegant, neat, well-kept little house.

Let me see if I have any news for you. I have received a most melancholy account of the last illness of poor Keats, which I will neither tell you nor send you, for it would make you too low-spirited.—My Elegy on him is finished: I have dipped my pen in consuming fire to chastise his destroyers; otherwise the tone of the poem is solemn and exalted. I send it to the press here, and you will soon have a copy.

Horace Smith tells me of a curious circumstance, which if I were in England would work me much annoyance. A low bookseller has got hold of "Queen Mab" and

published it, and says he will defy all prosecutions, and is selling them by thousands.

Horace Smith applied for an injunction on my part, but, like Southey, in "Wat Tyler," was refused. The abuse which all the Government prints are pouring forth on me, and, as Horace Smith says, the "diabolical calumnies which they vent, and which religion alone could inspire," is boundless.—I enjoy and am amused with the turmoil of these poor people ; but perhaps it is well for me that the Alps and the ocean are between us.—Medwin is going to be married to a daughter of Sir E. Dalbyn, only fifteen years old. He is in full chase to Venice.—I am trying to persuade Mary to ask your pardon ; I hope that I shall succeed.—In the meantime, as you were in the wrong you had better not ask hers, for that is unnecessary ; but write to her—if you had been in the right you would have done so.

Emelia's marriage is put off to September. I think of spending next winter in Florence. Mary talks of Rome.—We see the Williams's constantly—nice, good-natured people, very soft society after authors and pretenders to philosophy.

Godwin's "Malthus" is come : a dry but clever book, with decent interspersions of cant and sophistry.

Dearest girl, your most affectionate friend,

P. B. S.

I don't send your money till I hear do you come or no.  
Write next post.

[Addressed outside],

MISS CLAIRMONT,

Presso al Profe. BOJTI,

Palazzo Pitti,

Firenze.

413. TO THE EDITOR OF "THE EXAMINER"

FISA,

June 22, 1821.

SIR,

Having heard that a poem, entitled "Queen Mab," has

been surreptitiously published in London, and that legal proceedings have been instituted against the publisher, I request the favour of your insertion of the following explanation of the affair as it relates to me.

A poem, entitled "Queen Mab," was written by me at the age of eighteen, I dare say in a sufficiently intemperate spirit—but even then was not intended for publication, and a few copies only were struck off, to be distributed among my personal friends. I have not seen this production for several years; I doubt not but that it is perfectly worthless in point of literary composition; and that in all that concerns moral and political speculation, as well as in the subtler discriminations of metaphysical and religious doctrine, it is still more crude and immature. I am a devoted enemy to religious, political, and domestic oppression; and I regret this publication, not so much from literary vanity, as because I fear it is better fitted to injure than to serve the cause of freedom. I have directed my solicitor to apply to Chancery for an injunction to restrain the sale; but after the precedent of Mr. Southey's "Wat Tyler" (a poem, written, I believe, at the same age, and with the same unreflecting enthusiasm), with little hopes of success.

Whilst I exonerate myself from all share in having divulged opinions hostile to existing sanctions, under the form, whatever it may be, which they assume in this poem, it is scarcely necessary for me to protest against the system of inculcating the truth of Christianity and the excellence of Monarchy, however true or however excellent they may be, by such equivocal arguments as confiscation, and imprisonment, and invective, and slander, and the insolent violation of the most sacred ties of nature and society.

Sir, I am,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY,

## 414. TO JOHN AND MARIA GISBORNE

BAGNI DI PISA,

FRIDAY NIGHT (July 13, 1821).

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

I have been expecting every day a writ to attend at your court at Guebhard's, whence you know it is settled that I should conduct you hither to spend your last days in Italy. A thousand thanks for your maps; in return for which I send you the only copy of "Adonais" the printer has yet delivered. I wish I could say, as Glaucus could, in the exchange for the arms of Diomed,—*ἐκατόμβῳ εἰννεαβόλῳ*.

I will only remind you of "Faust;" my desire for the conclusion of which is only exceeded by my desire to welcome you.<sup>1</sup> Do you observe any traces of him in the poem I send you? Poets—the best of them, are a very camelionic race; they take the colour not only of what they feed on, but of the very leaves under which they pass.

Mary is just on the verge of finishing her novel; but it cannot be in time for you to take to England,—Farewell.

Most faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

## 415. TO CHARLES &amp; JAMES OLLIER

(London)

July 17, 1821.

DEAR SIRS,

I send you the bill of lading of the box containing "Adonais:" and I send also a copy to yourself by Mr. Gisborne who probably will arrive before the ship.—Pray put the enclosed in the post.

I add a few words on the subject of my last letter.—I think it of consequence that the circumstances of Mrs. S.'s having written the work I propose to you should be kept

<sup>1</sup> "Faust" was originally described as "a fragment:" the second part did not appear until 1831.

a profound secret, and I repose upon my confidence in you to that effect.<sup>1</sup> On consideration, I think that it ought not to be announced as written by the author of "Frankenstein": it bears every indication of the greatest popularity and many people might have been prejudiced by "Frankenstein" against a second attempt of the same author. The work I send you has been seen in part by Mr. Gisborne, and has excited, as it must in every one, the deepest interest.

Dear Sirs, yours very truly,  
P. B. SHELLEY.

Messrs. OLLIER & Co., Booksellers, Vere Street, Bond St., London.

416. To JOHN AND MARIA GISBORNE

BAGNI [DI PISA],  
July 19 [1821].

MY DEAREST FRIENDS,

I am fully repaid for the painful emotions from which some verses of my poem sprang, by your sympathy and approbation—which is all the reward I expect—and as much as I desire. It is not for me to judge whether, in the high praise your feelings assign me, you are right or wrong. The poet and the man are two different natures; though they exist together, they may be unconscious of each other, and incapable of deciding on each other's powers and efforts by any reflex act. The decision of the cause, whether or no *I* am a poet, is removed from the present time to the hour when our posterity shall assemble; but the court is a very severe one, and I fear that the verdict will be "Guilty—death!"

I shall be with you on the first summons. I hope that the time you have reserved for us, "this bank and shoal of time," is not so short as you once talked of.

In haste, most affectionately yours,  
P. B. S.

Mary Shelley's novel "Valperga."

## XIX. THE PISAN CIRCLE—"HELLAS"

August 1, 1821—April 11, 1822

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SHELLEY at Florence—Visits Byron at Ravenna—The Guiccioli—  
—The Hoppners' Malicious Scandal—Churches at Ravenna—  
Byron's Habits—Gives his Memoirs to Moore—Tita "the  
Venetian"—Byron's Menagerie—Allegra at the Convent—  
Dante's Tomb—Byron's Intention to Visit Pisa—Williams's Play  
—*The Liberal*—Mary Shelley's Novel—"Hellas"—Leigh Hunt  
Invited to Italy—Byron at Pisa—"The Exotic"—Saving a  
Heretic—"Charles the First"—Retzsch's Etchings for "Faust"  
—Leigh Hunt's Wanderings—Clare and Allegra—The Dragoon  
Affair.

### 417. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

(Bagni di Pisa)

LIONE BIANCO, FLORENCE,

TUESDAY [August 1, 1821].

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I shall not return this evening ; nor, unless I have better success, to-morrow. I have seen many houses, but very few within the compass of our powers ; and, even in those which seem to suit, nothing is more difficult than to bring the proprietors to terms.<sup>1</sup> I congratulate myself on having taken the season in time, as there is great expectation of Florence being full next winter. I shall do my utmost to return to-morrow evening. You may expect me about ten or eleven o'clock, as I shall purposely be late, to spare myself the excessive heat.

The Gisbornes (four o'clock, Tuesday,) are just set out in a diligence-and-four, for Bologna. They have promised to

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley left Mary at the Baths of Pisa on July 29, and went to Florence in search of a house for Horace Smith, in the company of the Gisbornes, who had been staying with the Shelleys, and were now on their way to England.

write from Paris. I spent three hours this morning principally in the contemplation of the Niobe, and of a favourite Apollo; all worldly thoughts and cares seem to vanish from before the sublime emotions such spectacles create; and I am deeply impressed with the great difference of happiness enjoyed by those who live at a distance from these incarnations of all that the finest minds have conceived of beauty, and those who can resort to their company at pleasure. What should we think if we were forbidden to read the great writers who have left us their works? And yet to be forbidden to live at Florence or Rome, is an evil of the same kind of scarcely less magnitude.

I am delighted to hear that the W[illiamses] are with you. I am convinced that Williams must persevere in the use of the doccia. Give my most affectionate remembrances to them. I shall know all the houses in Florence, and can give W[illiams] a good account of them all. You have not sent my passport, and I must get home as I can. I suppose you did not receive my note.

I grudge my sequins for a carriage; but I have suffered from the sun and the fatigue, and dare not expose myself to that which is necessary for house-hunting.

Kiss little babe, and how is he? but I hope to see him fast asleep to-morrow night. And pray, dearest Mary, have some of your novel<sup>1</sup> prepared for my return.

Your ever affectionate

SHELLEY.

#### 418. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

(Bagni di Pisa)

BOLOGNA,

Agosto 6, [1821].

DEAREST MINE,

I am at Bologna, and the caravella is ordered for Ravenna.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Valperga."

<sup>2</sup> Shelley returned to the Baths on August 2, but on the same day he received a letter from Byron, requesting him to come to Ravenna. The Countess Guiccioli's father and brother had been expelled from



I have been detained, by having made an embarrassing and inexplicable arrangement, more than twelve hours; or I should have arrived at Bologna last night instead of this morning.

Though I have travelled all night at the rate of two miles and a-half an hour, in a little open calesso, I am perfectly well in health. One would think that I were the spaniel of Destiny, for the more she knocks about me, the more I fawn on her. I had an overturn about daybreak; the old horse stumbled, and threw me and the fat vetturino into a slope of meadow, over the hedge. My angular figure stuck where it was pitched; but my vetturino's spherical form rolled fairly to the bottom of the hill, and that with so few symptoms of reluctance in the life that animated it, that my ridicule (for it was the drollest sight in the world) was suppressed by my fear that the poor devil had been hurt. But he was very well, and we continued our journey with great success. . . .

My love to the Williamses. Kiss my pretty one, and accept an affectionate one for yourself from me. The chaise waits. I will write the first night from Ravenna at length.

Yours ever,

S.

#### 419. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

RAVENNA,

August 7, 1821.

MY DEAREST MARY,

I arrived last night at ten o'clock, and sate up talking with Lord Byron until five this morning. I then went to

Romagna, and she herself had fled to Florence. Byron doubtless informed Shelley of his intention to leave Ravenna, and Shelley would naturally think of Allegra, who was in a convent at Bagnacavallo, where her father could visit her. But when he departed there would be no one to look after the child.

sleep, and now awake at eleven, and having despatched my breakfast as quick as possible, mean to devote the interval until twelve, when the post departs, to you.

Lord Byron is very well, and was delighted to see me. He has in fact completely recovered his health, and lives a life totally the reverse of that which he led at Venice. He has a permanent sort of liaison with Contessa Guiccioli,<sup>1</sup> who is now at Florence, and seems from her letters to be a very amiable woman. She is waiting there until something shall be decided as to their emigration to Switzerland or stay in Italy; which is yet undetermined on either side. She was compelled to escape from the Papal territory in great haste, as measures had already been taken to place her in a convent, where she would have been unrelentingly confined for life. The oppression of the marriage contract, as existing in the laws and opinions of Italy, though less frequently exercised, is far severer than that of England. I tremble to think of what poor Emilia is destined to.

Lord Byron had almost destroyed himself in Venice: his state of debility was such that he was unable to digest any food, he was consumed by hectic fever, and would speedily have perished, but for this attachment, which has reclaimed him from the excesses into which he threw himself from carelessness and pride, rather than taste. Poor fellow! he is now quite well, and immersed in politics and literature. He has given me a number of the most interesting details on the former subject, but we will not speak of them in a letter. Fletcher<sup>2</sup> is here; and (as if, like a shadow, he waxed and waned with the substance of his master) Fletcher also has recovered his good looks, and from amidst the unseasonable grey hairs, a fresh harvest of flaxen locks put forth.

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<sup>1</sup> Teresa Gamba Guiccioli (1801-1873) was the daughter of a Ravenna nobleman. She married in 1817 Count Guiccioli, who was sixty. Her connection with Byron lasted from 1819 to 1823. In 1851 she married a French Marquis de Boissy. Her book, "Lord Byron jugé par les témoins de sa vie," was published in 1868.

<sup>2</sup> Byron's servant,

We talked a great deal of poetry, and such matters last night ; and as usual differed, and I think more than ever. He affects to patronise a system of criticism fit for the production of mediocrity, and although all his fine poems and passages have been produced in defiance of this system, yet I recognise the pernicious effects of it in the "Doge of Venice;"<sup>1</sup> and it will cramp and limit his future efforts, however great they may be, unless he gets rid of it. I have read only parts of it, or rather he himself read them to me, and gave me the plan of the whole.

Lord Byron has also told me of a circumstance that shocks me exceedingly ; because it exhibits a degree of desperate and wicked malice for which I am at a loss to account. When I hear such things my patience and my philosophy are put to a severe proof, whilst I refrain from seeking out some obscure hiding-place, where the countenance of man may never meet me more. It seems that *Elise*, actuated either by some inconceivable malice for our dismissing her, or bribed by my enemies, or making common cause with her infamous husband, has persuaded the Hoppners of a story so monstrous and incredible that they must have been prone to believe any evil to have believed such assertions upon such evidence. Mr. Hoppner wrote to Lord Byron to state this story as the reason why he declined any further communications with us, and why he advised him to do the same. *Elise* says that *Claire* was my mistress ; that is very well, and so far there is nothing new ; all the world has heard so much, and people may believe or not believe as they think good. She then proceeds to say that *Claire* is with child by me ; that I gave her the most violent medicine to produce abortion ; that this not succeeding she was brought to bed, and that I immediately tore the child from her and sent it to the Foundling Hospital. I quote Mr. Hoppner's words—and

<sup>1</sup> Byron's "Marino Faliero, Doge of Venice, an Historical Tragedy in five acts," and "The Prophecy of Dante" were published in 1821 together in one volume.

this is stated to have taken place in the winter after we left Este. In addition, she says that both I and Claire treated *you* in the most shameful manner, that I neglected and beat you, and that Claire never let a day pass without offering you insults of the most violent kind, in which she was abetted by me.

As to what Reviews and the world says, I do not care a jot, but when persons who have known me are capable of conceiving me—not that I have fallen into a great error, as would have been the living with Claire as my mistress—but that I have committed such unutterable crimes as destroying or abandoning a child, and that my own! Imagine my despair of good, imagine how it is possible that one of so weak and sensitive a nature as mine can run further the gauntlet through this hellish society of men. *You* should write to the Hoppners a letter refuting the charge, in case you believe, and know, and can prove that it is false; stating the grounds and proofs of your belief. I need not dictate what you should say; nor, I hope, inspire you with warmth to rebut a charge, which you only can effectually rebut. If you will send the letter to me here, I will forward it to the Hoppners. Lord Byron is not up, I do not know the Hoppners' address, and I am anxious not to lose a post.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Immediately on the receipt of Shelley's letter, Mary addressed a long and pathetic letter to Mrs. Hoppner repudiating the shameful slanders that had been made against her husband. In this letter she told how Elise, her former maid, had formed an attachment with Paolo, who, having been in the Shelleys' employment, had been discharged for dishonesty and had revenged himself by attempting to extort money from his former master. When Mary Shelley discovered that Elise was in trouble through her lover, she had had her married to Paolo. The whole story was a plot of the wretched couple against Shelley and his wife. "You ought to have paused," Mary said, "before you tried to convince the father of her child [*i.e.*, Byron, the father of Miss Clairmont's child], of such unheard atrocities on her part. If his generosity and knowledge of the world had not made him reject the slander with the ridicule it deserved, what irremediable mischief [it] would have occasioned her!" This letter was sent to Shelley to be forwarded to Mrs. Hoppner, and we see (p. 994) that he put it into Byron's hands, who volunteered to

## 420. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

(Bagno di Pisa)

RAVENNA,

THURSDAY, 9th August [1821].

MY DEAREST MARY,

I wrote to you yesterday, and I begin another letter to-day, without knowing exactly when I can send it, as I am told the post only goes once a week. I dare say the subject of the latter half of my letter gave you pain, but it was necessary to look the affair in the face, and the only satisfactory answer to the calumny must be given by you, and could be given by you, alone. This is evidently the source of the violent denunciations of the *Literary Gazette*, in themselves contemptible enough, and only to be regarded as effects, which show us their cause, which, until we put off our mortal nature, we never despise—that is, the belief of persons who have known and seen you, that you are guilty of crimes.

A certain degree and a certain kind of infamy is to be borne, and, in fact, is the best compliment which an exalted nature can receive from the filthy world, of which it is its hell to be a part; but this sort of thing exceeds the measure; and even if it were only for the sake of our dear Percy, I would take some pains to suppress it. In fact, it shall be suppressed, even if I am driven to the

convey it to her. The letter was found among Byron's papers after his death. He may have sent it to Hoppner telling him to return it, Hoppner may have complied. Or he may not have sent the letter. Byron assumed in the affair an attitude of sympathy towards Shelley; yet less than five months before he had used a portion of Paolo's hideous story as a reason to justify him to Mr. Hoppner for disregarding Clare's petition against sending Allegra to a convent. She had spoken of the Italian convent-educated women as making bad wives and unnatural mothers. In forwarding Clare's letter containing these words to Mr. Hoppner, Byron had written: "The moral part of this letter upon Italians, etc., comes with excellent grace from the writer, now living with a *man* and his *wife* [meaning Shelley and Mary], and having planted a child in the Fl. Foundling, etc." Professor Dowden, whose words I have made use of in this note, has printed Mary Shelley's letters in full.

disagreeable necessity of prosecuting Elise before the Tuscan tribunals.

After having sent my letter to the post yesterday, I went to see some of the antiquities of this place; which appear to be remarkable. This city was once of vast extent, and the traces of its remains are to be found more than four miles from the gate of the modern town. The sea, which once came close to it, has now retired to the distance of four miles, leaving a melancholy extent of marshes, interspersed with patches of cultivation, and towards the seashore with pine forests, which have followed the retrocession of the Adriatic, and the roots of which are actually washed by its waves. The level of the sea and of this tract of country correspond so nearly, that a ditch dug to a few feet in depth, is immediately filled up with sea water. All the ancient buildings have been choked up to the height of from five to twenty feet by the deposit of the sea, and of the inundations, which are frequent in the winter. I went in L. B.'s carriage, first to the Chiesa San Vitale, which is certainly one of the most ancient churches in Italy. It is a rotunda, supported upon buttresses and pilasters of white marble; the ill effect of which is somewhat relieved by an interior row of columns. The dome is very high and narrow. The whole church, in spite of the elevation of the soil, is very high for its breadth, and is of a very peculiar and striking construction. In the section of one of the large tables of marble with which the church is lined, they showed me the *perfect figure*, as perfect as if it had been painted, of a Capuchin friar, which resulted merely from the shadings and the position of the stains in the marble. This is what may be called a pure anticipated cognition of a Capuchin.

I then went to the tomb of Theodosius, which has now been dedicated to the Virgin, without, however, any change in its original appearance. It is about a mile from the present city. This building is more than half overwhelmed by the elevated soil, although a portion of the lower storey

has been excavated, and is filled with brackish and stinking waters, and a sort of vaporous darkness, and troops of prodigious frogs. It is a remarkable piece of architecture, and without belonging to a period when the ancient taste yet survived, bears, nevertheless, a certain impression of that taste. It consists of two stories; the lower supported on Doric arches and pilasters, and a simple entablature. The other circular within, and polygonal outside, and roofed with one single mass of ponderous stone, for it is evidently one, and Heaven alone knows how they contrived to lift it to that height. It is a sort of flattish dome, rough-wrought within by the chisel, from which the Northern Conquerors tore the plates of silver that adorned it, and polished without, with things like handles appended to it, which were also wrought out of the solid stone, and to which I suppose the ropes were applied to draw it up. You ascend externally into the second storey by a flight of stone steps, which are modern.

The next place I went to was a church called *la chiesa di Sant' Appollinare*, which is a Basilica, and built by one, I forget whom, of the Christian Emperors; it is a long church, with a roof like a barn, and supported by twenty-four columns of the finest marble, with an altar of jasper, and four columns of jasper, and giallo antico, supporting the roof of the tabernacle which are said to be of immense value. It is something like that church (I forget the name of it) we saw at Rome, *fuore delle mura*.<sup>1</sup> I suppose the Emperor stole these columns, which seem not at all to belong to the place they occupy. Within the city, near the church of San Vitale, there is to be seen the tomb of the Empress Galla Placidia, daughter of Theodosius the Great, together with those of her husband Constantius, her brother Honorius, and her son Valentinian—all Emperors. The tombs are massy cases of marble, adorned

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<sup>1</sup> "San Paolo fuore delle mura—burnt down, and its beautiful columns calcined by the fire, in 1823—now rebuilt."—Mrs. Shelley's note.

with rude and tasteless sculpture of lambs, and other Christian emblems, with scarcely a trace of the antique. It seems to have been one of the first effects of the Christian religion to destroy the power of producing beauty in art. These tombs are placed in a sort of vaulted chamber, wrought over with rude mosaic, which is said to have been built in 1300. I have yet seen no more of Ravenna.

FRIDAY.

We ride out in the evening, through the pine forests which divide this city from the sea. Our way of life is this, and I have accommodated myself to it without much difficulty:—L. B. gets up at two, breakfasts; we talk, read, etc., until six; then we ride, and dine at eight; and after dinner sit talking till four or five in the morning. I get up at twelve, and am now devoting the interval between my rising and his, to you.

L. B. is greatly improved in every respect. In genius, in temper, in moral views, in health, in happiness. The connexion with la Guiccioli has been an inestimable benefit to him. He lives in considerable splendour, but within his income, which is now about £4,000 a-year<sup>1</sup>; £100 of which he devotes to purposes of charity. He has had mischievous passions, but these he seems to have subdued, and he is becoming what he should be, a virtuous man. The interest which he took in the politics of Italy, and the actions he performed in consequence of it, are subjects not fit to be *written*, but are such as will delight and surprise you. He is not yet decided to go to Switzerland—a place, indeed, little fitted for him: the gossip and the cabals of those anglicised coteries would torment him, as they did before, and might exasperate him into a relapse of libertinism, which he says he plunged into not from taste, but despair. La Guiccioli and her brother (who is L. B.'s friend and confidant, and acquiesces perfectly in her connexion with him), wish to go to Switzerland; as L. B. says, merely from the novelty of the pleasure of

<sup>1</sup> See page 938 where Shelley speaks of Byron's income as from £12,000 to £15,000.



travelling. L. B. prefers Tuscany or Lucca, and is trying to persuade them to adopt his views. He has made *me* write a long letter to her to engage her to remain—an odd thing enough for an utter stranger to write on subjects of the utmost delicacy to his friend's mistress. But it seems destined that I am always to have some active part in everybody's affairs whom I approach. I have set down, in lame Italian, the strongest reasons I can think of against the Swiss emigration—to tell you truth, I should be very glad to accept, as my fee, his establishment in Tuscany. Ravenna is a miserable place; the people are barbarous and wild, and their language the most infernal patois that you can imagine. He would be, in every respect, better among the Tuscans. I am afraid he would not like Florence, on account of the English there. There is Lucca, Florence, Pisa, Siena, and I think nothing more. What think you of Prato, or Pistoia, for him?—no Englishman approaches those towns; but I am afraid no house could be found good enough for him in that region.

He has read to me one of the unpublished cantos of Don Juan, which is astonishingly fine. It sets him not only above, but far above, all the poets of the day—every word is stamped with immortality. I despair of rivalling Lord Byron, as well as I may, and there is no other with whom it is worth contending. This canto is in the style, but totally, and sustained with incredible ease and power, like the end of the second canto. There is not a word which the most rigid asserter of the dignity of human nature would desire to be cancelled. It fulfils, in a certain degree, what I have long preached of producing—something wholly new and relative to the age, and yet surpassingly beautiful. It may be vanity, but I think I see the trace of my earnest exhortations to him to create something wholly new. He has finished his *life* up to the present time, and given it to Moore, with liberty for Moore to sell it for the best price he can get, with condition that the bookseller should publish it after his death. Moore

has sold it to Murray for *two thousand pounds*. I have spoken to him of Hunt, but not with a direct view of demanding a contribution ; and, though I am sure that if asked it would not be refused—yet there is something in me that makes it impossible. Lord Byron and I are excellent friends, and were I reduced to poverty, or were I a writer who had no claims to a higher station than I possess—or did I possess a higher than I deserve, we should appear in all things as such, and I would freely ask him any favour. Such is not the case. The demon of mistrust and pride lurks between two persons in our situation, poisoning the freedom of our intercourse. This is a tax, and a heavy one, which we must pay for being human. I think the fault is not on my side, nor is it likely, I being the weaker. I hope that in the next world these things will be better managed. What is passing in the heart of another, rarely escapes the observation of one who is a strict anatomist of his own.

Write to me at Florence, where I shall remain a day at least, and send me letters, or news of letters. How is my little darling ? And how are you, and how do you get on with your book ? Be severe in your corrections, and expect severity from me, your sincere admirer. I flatter myself you have composed something unequalled in its kind, and that, not content with the honours of your birth and your hereditary aristocracy, you will add still higher renown to your name. Expect me at the end of my appointed time. I do not think I shall be detained. Is Claire with you, or is she coming ? Have you heard anything of my poor Emilia, from whom I got a letter the day of my departure, saying, that her marriage was deferred for a *very short* time, on account of the illness of her spouse ? How are the Williams's, and Williams especially ? Give my very kindest love to them.

Lord B. has here splendid apartments in the house of his mistress's husband, who is one of the richest men in Italy. *She* is divorced, with an allowance of 1,200 crowns a year,

a miserable pittance from a man who has 120,000 a-year.— Here are two monkeys, five cats, eight dogs, and ten horses, all of whom (except the horses), walk about the house like the masters of it. *Tita* the Venetian is here, and operates as my valet; a fine fellow, with a prodigious black beard, and who has stabbed two or three people, and is one of the most good-natured looking fellows I ever saw.

We have good rumours of the Greeks here, and a Russian war. I hardly wish the Russians to take any part in it. My maxim is with *Æschylus*:—τὸ δυσσεβὲς—μετὰ μὲν πλείονα τίκτει, σφετέρᾳ δ' εἰκότα γεννᾷ. There is a Greek exercise for you. How should slaves produce anything but tyranny—even as the seed produces the plant?

Adieu, dear Mary.

Yours affectionately,  
S.

#### 421. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

RAVENNA,

August (probably 10th), 1821.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

I received your last letter just as I was setting off from the Bagni on a visit to Lord Byron at this place. Many thanks for all your kind attention to my accursed affairs. I am happy to tell you that my income is satisfactorily arranged, although Horace Smith having received it, and being still on his slow journey through France, I cannot send you, as I wished to have done, the amount of my debt immediately, but must defer it till I see him or till my September quarter, which is now very near.—I am very much obliged to you for your way of talking about it—but of course, if I cannot do you any good, I will not permit you to be a sufferer by me.—

I have sent you by the Gisbornes a copy of the *Elegy on Keats*. The subject, I know, will not please you; but the composition of the poetry, and the taste in which it is written, I do not think bad. You and the enlightened

public will judge. Lord Byron is in excellent cue both of health and spirits. He has got rid of all those melancholy and degrading habits which he indulged [in] at Venice. He lives with one woman, a lady of rank here, to whom he is attached, and who is attached to him, and is in every respect an altered man. He has written three more cantos of "Don Juan." I have yet only heard the fifth, and I think that every word of it is pregnant with immortality. I have not seen his late plays, except "Marino Faliero," which is very well, but not so transcendently fine as the "Don Juan." Lord Byron gets up at *two*. I get up, quite contrary to my usual custom, but one must sleep or die, like Southey's sea-snake in "Kehama," at 12. After breakfast we sit talking till six. From six till eight we gallop through the pine forests which divide Ravenna from the sea; we then come home and dine, and sit up gossiping till six in the morning. I don't suppose this will kill me in a week or fortnight, but I shall not try it longer. Lord B.'s establishment consists, besides servants, of ten horses, eight enormous dogs, three monkeys, five cats, an eagle, a crow, and a falcon; and all these, except the horses, walk about the house, which every now and then resounds with their unarbitrated quarrels, as if they were the masters of it. Lord B. thinks you wrote a pamphlet signed "John Bull;" he says he knew it by the style resembling "Melincourt," of which he is a great admirer. I read it, and assured him that it could not possibly be yours.<sup>1</sup> I write

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<sup>1</sup> "Most probably Shelley's partiality for me and my book put too favourable a construction on what Lord Byron may have said. Lord Byron told Captain Medwin that a friend of Shelley's had written a novel of which he had forgotten the name founded on his bear. He described it sufficiently to identify it, and Captain Medwin supplied the title in a note; but assuredly when I condensed Lord Monboddo's views of the humanity of the *Oran Outang* into the character of *Sir Oran Haut-ton*, I thought neither of Lord Byron's bear nor of Caligula's horse. But Lord Byron was much in the habit of fancying that all the world was spinning on his pivot. As to the pamphlet signed John Bull, I certainly did not write it. I never even saw it, and do not know what it was about."—Peacock's note.

nothing, and probably shall write no more. It offends me to see my name classed among those who have no name. If I cannot be something better, I had rather be nothing, and the accursed cause to the downfall of which I dedicate what powers I may have had—flourishes like a cedar and covers England with its boughs. My motive was never the infirm desire of fame; and if I should continue an author, I feel that I should desire it. This cup is justly given to one only of an age; indeed, participation would make it worthless: and unfortunate they who seek it and find it not.

I congratulate you—I hope I ought to do so—on your expected stranger. He is introduced into a rough world. My regards to Hogg, and Co[ul]son if you see him.

Ever most faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

After I have sealed my letter, I find that my enumeration of the animals in this Circean Palace was defective, and that in a material point. I have just met on the grand staircase five peacocks, two guinea hens, and an Egyptian crane. I wonder who all these animals were before they were changed into these shapes.

#### 422. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

RAVENNA,

SATURDAY [August 11, 1821].

MY DEAR MARY,

You will be surprised to hear that L[ord] B[yron] has decided upon coming to *Pisa*, in case he shall be able, with my assistance, to prevail upon his mistress to remain in Italy, of which I think there is little doubt. He wishes for a large and magnificent house, but he has furniture of his own, which he would send from Ravenna. Inquire if any of the large palaces are to be let. We discussed Prato, Pistoia, Lucca, etc., but they would not suit him so well as Pisa, to which, indeed, he shows a decided

preference. So let it be! Florence he objects to, on account of the prodigious influx of English.

I don't think this circumstance ought to make any difference in our own plans with respect to this winter in Florence, because we could easily reassume our station with the spring, at Pugnano or the baths, in order to enjoy the society of the noble lord. But do you consider this point, and write to me your full opinion, at the Florence post office.

I suffer much to-day from the pain in my side, brought on, I believe, by this accursed water. In other respects, I am pretty well, and my spirits are much improved; they had been unproving, indeed, before I left the baths, after the deep dejection of the early part of the year.

I am reading "Anastasius."<sup>1</sup> One would think that L[ord] B[yron] had taken his idea of the three last cantos of "Don Juan" from this book. That, of course, has nothing to do with the merit of this latter, poetry having nothing to do with the invention of facts. It is a very powerful, and very entertaining novel, and a faithful picture, they say, of modern Greek manners. I have read L[ord] B[yron]'s Letter to Bowles: some good things—but he ought not to write prose criticism.

You will receive a long letter, sent with some of L[ord] B[yron]'s, express to Florence. I write this in haste.

Yours most affectionately,  
S.

#### 423. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

RAVENNA,

TUESDAY, August 14,<sup>2</sup> 1821.

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I accept your kind present of your picture,<sup>3</sup> and wish

<sup>1</sup> By Thomas Hope.

<sup>2</sup> This letter is dated the 15th in the copy printed by Mrs. Shelley, but the 15th was on Wednesday.

<sup>3</sup> Probably a present for Shelley's birthday—August 4th.

you would get it prettily framed for me. I will wear, for your sake, upon my heart this image which is ever present to my mind.

I have only two minutes to write, the post is just setting off. I shall leave this place on Thursday or Friday morning. You would forgive me for my longer stay, if you knew the fighting I have had to make it so short. I need not say where my own feelings impel me.

It still remains fixed that L. B. should come to Tuscany, and, if possible, Pisa ; but more of that to-morrow.

Your faithful and affectionate

S.

424. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

RAVENNA,

15 Aug[ust], 1821.

I went the other day to see Allegra at her convent,<sup>1</sup> and stayed with her about three hours. She is grown tall and slight for her age, and her face is somewhat altered. The traits have become more delicate, and she is much paler, probably from the effect of improper food. She yet retains the beauty of her deep blue eyes and of her mouth, but she has a contemplative seriousness which, mixed with her excessive vivacity, which has not yet deserted her, has a very peculiar effect in a child. She is under very strict discipline as may be observed from the immediate obedience she accords to the will of her attendants. This seems contrary to her nature, but I do not think it has been obtained at the expense of much severity. Her hair, scarcely darker than it was, is beautifully profuse, and hangs in large curls on her neck. She was prettily dressed in white muslin, and an apron of black silk, with trousers. Her light and airy figure and her graceful motions were a striking contrast to the other children there.

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<sup>1</sup> At Bagnacavallo, see p. 867.

She seemed a thing of a finer and a higher order. At first she was very shy, but after a little caressing, and especially after I had given her a gold chain which I had bought at Ravenna for her, she grew more familiar, and led me all over the garden, and all over the convent, running and skipping so fast that I could hardly keep up with her. She showed me her little bed, and the chair where she sat at dinner, and the *carozzina* in which she and her favourite companions drew each other along a walk in the garden. I had brought her a basket of sweetmeats, and before eating any of them she gave her companions and each of the nuns a portion. This is not much like the old Allegra. I asked her what I should say from her to her mama, and she said :—

“Che mi manda un bacio e un bel vestituro.”

“E come vuoi il vestituro sia fatto ?”

“Tutto di seta e d'oro,” was her reply.

Her predominant foible seems the love of distinction and vanity, and this is a plant which produces good or evil according to the gardener's skill. I then asked what I should say to papa ? “Che venga farmi un visitino e che porta seco la *mammìna*,” a message which you may conjecture that I was too discreet to deliver. Before I went away she made me run all over the convent, like a mad thing. The nuns, who were half in bed, were ordered to hide themselves, and on returning Allegra began ringing the bell which calls the nuns to assemble. The tocsin of the convent sounded, and it required all the efforts of the prioress to prevent the spouses of God from rendering themselves, dressed or undressed, to the accustomed signal. Nobody scolded her for these *scappature*, so I suppose she is well treated, so far as temper is concerned. Her intellect is not much cultivated. She knows certain *orazioni* by heart, and talks and dreams of *Paradiso* and all sorts of things, and has a prodigious list of saints, and is always talking of the Bambino. This will do her no harm, but the idea of bringing up so sweet a creature in the midst of such trash till sixteen !



## 425. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY

RAVENNA,

WEDNESDAY [August 15, 1821].

MY DEAREST LOVE,

I write, though I doubt whether I shall not arrive before this letter; as the post only leaves Ravenna once a week, on Saturdays, and as I hope to set out to-morrow evening by the courier. But as I must necessarily stay a day at Florence, and as the natural incidents of travelling may prevent me from taking my intended advantage of the couriers, it is probable that this letter will arrive first. Besides, as I will explain, I am not *yet* quite my own master. But that by-and-bye. I do not think it necessary to tell you of my impatience to return to you and my little darling, or the disappointment with which I have prolonged my absence from you. I am happy to think that you are not quite alone.

Lord Byron is still decided upon Tuscany: and such is his impatience, that he has desired me—as if I should not arrive in time—to write to you to inquire for the best unfurnished palace in Pisa, and to enter upon a treaty for it. It is better not to be on the Lung' Arno; but, in fact, there is no such hurry, and as I shall see you so soon it is not worth while to trouble yourself about it.

I told you I had written by L[ord] B[yrone]'s desire to la Guiccioli, to dissuade her and her family from Switzerland. Her answer is this moment arrived, and my representation seems to have reconciled them to the unfitness of that step. At the conclusion of a letter, full of all the fine things she says she has heard of me, is this request, which I transcribe:—"Signore—la vostra bontà mi fa ardita di chiedervi un favore—me lo accorderete voi? Non partite da Ravenna senza Milord." Of course, being now, by all the laws of knighthood, captive to a lady's request, I shall only be at liberty on *my parole*, until Lord Byron

is settled at Pisa. I shall reply, of course, that the *boon* is granted, and that if her lover is reluctant to quit Ravenna after I have made arrangements for receiving him at Pisa, I am bound to place myself in the same situation as now, to assail him with importunities to rejoin her. Of this there is, fortunately, no need ; and I need not tell you there is no fear that this chivalric submission of mine to the great general laws of antique courtesy, against which I never rebel, and which is my religion, should interfere with my quick returning, and long remaining with you, dear girl.

I have seen Dante's tomb, and worshipped the sacred spot. The building and its accessories are comparatively modern, but the urn itself, and the tablet of marble, with his portrait in relief, are evidently of equal antiquity with his death. The countenance has all the marks of being taken from his own ; the lines are strongly marked, far more than the portraits, which, however, it resembles ; except, indeed, the eye, which is half closed, and reminded me of Pacchiani. It was probably taken after death. I saw the library, and some specimens of the earliest illuminated printing from the press of *Faust*. They are on vellum, and of an execution little inferior to that of the present day.

We ride out every evening as usual, and practise pistol-shooting at pumpkin ; and I am not sorry to observe, that I approach towards my noble friend's exactness of aim. The water here is villainous, and I have suffered tortures ; but I now drink nothing but alcalescent water, and am much relieved. I have the greatest trouble to get away ; and L[ord] B[yron], as a reason for my stay, has urged that, without either me or the Guiccioli, he will certainly fall into his old habits. I then talk, and he listens to reason ; and I earnestly hope that he is too well aware of the terrible and degrading consequences of his former mode of life, to be in danger from the short interval of temptation that will be left him. L[ord] B[yron]

speaks with great kindness and interest of you, and seems to wish to see you.

RAVENNA,

THURSDAY [August 16, 1821].

I have received your letter with that of Mrs. Hoppner. I do not wonder, my dearest friend, that you should have been moved. I was at first, but speedily regained the indifference which the opinion of anything, or anybody, except our own consciousness, amply merits; and day by day shall more receive from me. I have not recopied your letter; such a measure would destroy its authenticity, but have given it to Lord Byron, who has engaged to send it with his own comments to the Hoppners. People do not hesitate, it seems, to make themselves panderers and accomplices to slander, for the Hoppners had exacted from Lord Byron that these accusations should be concealed from *me*. Lord Byron is not a man to keep a secret, good or bad; but in openly confessing that he has not done so, he must observe a certain delicacy, and therefore wished to send the letter himself, and indeed this adds weight to your representations. Have you seen the article in the *Literary Gazette* on me? They evidently allude to some story of this kind—however cautious the Hoppners have been in preventing the calumniated person from asserting his justification, you know too much of the world not to be certain that this was the utmost limit of their caution. So much for nothing.

Lord Byron is immediately coming to Pisa. He will set off the moment I can get him a house. Who would have imagined this? Our first thought ought to be —, our second our own plans. The hesitation in your letter about Florence has communicated itself to me; although I hardly see what we can do about Horace Smith, to whom our attentions are so due, and would be so useful. If I do not arrive before this long scrawl, write something to Florence to decide me. I shall certainly, not without

strong reasons, at present *sign* the agreement for the old codger's house ; although the extreme beauty and fitness of the place, should we decide on Florence, might well overbalance the objection of your deaf visitor. One thing—with Lord Byron and the people we know at Pisa, we should have a security and protection, which seems to be more questionable at Florence. But I do not think that this consideration ought to weigh. What think you of remaining at Pisa ? The Williams's would probably be induced to stay there if we did ; Hunt would certainly stay, at least this winter, near us, should he emigrate at all ; Lord Byron and his Italian friends would remain quietly there ; and Lord Byron has certainly a great regard for us—the regard of such a man is worth—*some* of the tribute we must pay to the base passions of humanity in any intercourse with those within their circle ; he is better worth it than those on whom we bestow it from mere custom. The Masons are there, and as far as solid affairs are concerned, are my friends. I allow this is an argument for Florence. Mrs. Mason's perversity is very annoying to me, especially as Mr. Tighe is seriously my friend. This circumstance makes me averse from that intimate continuation of intercourse which, once having begun, I can no longer avoid. At Pisa I need not distil my water—if I *can* distil it anywhere. Last winter I suffered less from my painful disorder than the winter I spent at Florence. The arguments for Florence you know, and they are very weighty ; judge (*I know you like the job*), which scale is overbalanced. My greatest content would be utterly to desert all human society. I would retire with you and our child to a solitary island in the sea, would build a boat, and shut upon my retreat the floodgates of the world. I would read no reviews, and talk with no authors. If I dared trust my imagination, it would tell me that there are one or two chosen companions besides yourself whom I should desire. But to this I would not listen—where two or three are gathered together, the devil is among them.

And good, far more than evil impulses, love, far more than hatred, has been to me, except as you have been its object, the source of all sorts of mischief. So on this plan, I would be *alone*, and would devote, either to oblivion or to future generations, the overflowings of a mind which, timely withdrawn from the contagion, should be kept fit for no baser object. But this it does not appear that we shall do.

The other side of the alternative (for a medium ought not to be adopted) is to form for ourselves a society of our own class, as much as possible in intellect, or in feelings; and to connect ourselves with the interests of that society. Our roots never struck so deeply as at Pisa, and the transplanted tree flourishes not. People who lead the lives which we led until last winter, are like a family of Wahabee Arabs, pitching their tent in the midst of London. We must do one thing or the other—for yourself, for our child, for our existence. The calumnies, the source of which are probably deeper than we perceive, have ultimately, for object, the depriving us of the means of security and subsistence. You will easily perceive the gradations by which calumny proceeds to pretext, pretext to persecution, and persecution to the ban of fire and water. It is for this, and not because this or that fool, or the whole court of fools, curse and rail, that calumny is worth refuting or chastising.

426. To THOMAS MEDWIN

PISA, August 22, 1821.

MY DEAR MEDWIN,

How do you know that there are not seven distinct letters, patiently waiting with the Williams's, seven lost letters, in the seven distinct post offices of Italy, whose contents you have never unveiled?—To write to you hitherto would have been such an enterprise as if the oyster might undertake a correspondence with the eagle, with orders that the billets should be left until called for on every promontory, thunder cloud, or mountain, where the imperial bird chance to pass.

I have read with pleasure your elegant stanzas on

Tivoli. What have you done with the compositions you have sent to England? I am particularly interested in the fate of the stanzas on the lake of Geneva, which seemed to me the best you ever wrote. Have you any idea, according to my counsel, of disciplining your powers to any more serious undertaking? It might at once contribute to your happiness and your success; but consider that Poetry, although its source is native and involuntary, requires in its development severe attention.

I am happy to hear that "Adonais" pleased you; I was considering how I could send you a copy;—nor am I less flattered by your friend Sir John's approbation.—I think I shall write again.—Whilst you were with me, that is during the latter period, and after you went away, I was harassed by some severe disquietudes, the causes of which are now I hope almost at an end. What were the speculations which you say disturbed you? My mind is at peace respecting nothing so much as the constitution and mysteries of the great system of things;—my curiosity on the point never amounts to solicitude.

Williams's play,<sup>1</sup> if not a dramatic effort of the highest order, is one of the most manly, spirited, and natural pieces of writing I ever met with.—It is full of observation, both of nature and of human nature; the theatrical effect and interest seems to be strong and well kept up. I confess that I was surprised at his success, and shall be still more so if it is not universally acknowledged on the stage. It is worth fifty such things as Cornwall's "Mirandola."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Williams's play was "The Promise, or a Year, a Month, and a Day," in the composition of which (he tells us in his journal,) he passed the first three months of his retirement at Pisa. The play was sent home on July 30 for a friend to present for representation at one of the principal theatres. Shelley told Williams, "if they accepted it, he has great hopes of its success before an audience," and he adds: "his hopes always enliven mine."

<sup>2</sup> Procter's tragedy, "Mirandola," was produced successfully at Covent Garden Theatre in 1821, under his pseudonym "Barry Cornwall."

I am just returned from a visit to Lord Byron at Ravenna, whom I have succeeded in rousing to attack the *Quarterly*. I believe he is about to migrate to this part of the world.

We see the Williams's every day, and my regard for them is every day increased; I hardly know which I like best, but I know that Jane is your favourite.

We are undecided for Florence or Pisa this winter, but in either of these places I confidently expect that we shall see you. Mary unites with me in best regards, and I remain, my dear Medwin,

Faithfully and affectionately yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

I am delighted to hear that you have so entirely recovered your health—I hardly dared to hope so last winter.

P.S.—I think you must have put up by mistake a MS. translation of the "Symposium" of Plato; if so, pray contrive to send it me. I have one or two of your books which I keep till I give you instructions.

#### 427. To LEIGH HUNT

(Hampstead)

PISA,

August 26, 1821.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

Since I last wrote to you, I have been on a visit to Lord Byron at Ravenna. The result of this visit was a determination, on his part, to come and live at Pisa; and I have taken the finest palace<sup>1</sup> on the Lung' Arno for him. But the material part of my visit consists in a message which he desires me to give to you, and which I think, ought to add to your determination—for such a one I hope you have formed—of restoring your shattered health and spirits by a migration to these "regions mild of calm and serene air."

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<sup>1</sup> The Lanfranchi Palace. Byron did not arrive at Pisa until Thursday, November 1, 1821.

He (Lord Byron) proposes that you should come and go shares with him and me in a periodical work,<sup>1</sup> to be conducted here ; in which each of the contracting parties should publish all their original compositions, and share the profits. He proposed it to Moore, but for some reason or other it was never brought to bear. There can be no doubt that the profits of any scheme in which you and Lord Byron engage, must from various, yet co-operating reasons, be very great. As for myself, I am, for the present, only a sort of link between you and him, until you can know each other, and effectuate the arrangements ; since (to entrust you with a secret which, for your sake, I withhold from Lord Byron) nothing would induce me to share in the profits, and still less, in the borrowed splendour of such a partnership. You and he, in different manners, would be equal, and would bring, in a different manner, but in the same proportion, equal stock of reputation and success. Do not let my frankness with you, nor my belief that you deserve it more than Lord Byron, have the effect of deterring you from assuming a station in modern literature, which the universal voice of my contemporaries forbids me either to stoop or to aspire to. I am, and I desire to be, nothing.

I did not ask Lord Byron to assist me in sending a remittance for your journey ; because there are men, however excellent, from whom we would never receive an obligation, in the worldly sense of the word ; and I am as jealous for my friend as for myself. I, as you know, have not it ; but I suppose that I shall at last make up an impudent face, and ask Horace Smith to add to the many obligations he has conferred on me—I know I need only ask.

I think I have never told you how very much I like your "Amyntas ;"<sup>2</sup> it almost reconciles me to translations. In another sense I still demur. You might have written another such poem as the "Nymphs," with no great access

<sup>1</sup> *The Liberal*.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 755.



of efforts. I am full of thoughts and plans, and should do something, if the feeble and irritable frame which incloses it was willing to obey the spirit. I fancy that then I should do great things.

B. fore this you will have seen "Adonais." Lord Byron—I suppose from modesty, on account of his being mentioned in it—did not say a word of "Adonais," though he was loud in his praise of "Prometheus Unbound," and, what you will not agree with him in, censures of "The Cenci." Certainly, if "Marino Faliero" is a drama, "Cenci" is not—but that between ourselves.

Lord Byron is reformed, as far as gallantry goes, and lives with a beautiful and sentimental Italian Lady (the Countess Giuccioli), who is as much attached to him as may be. I trust greatly to his intercourse with you for his creed to become as pure as he thinks his conduct is. He has many generous and exalted qualities, but the canker of aristocracy wants to be cut out, and something, God knows, wants to be cut out of us all—except perhaps you!

An Italian impromptu of mine.—Correct the language, if there should be errors, and do what you will with it.

#### BUONA NOTTE.

'Buona notte, Buona notte!'—Come mai  
La Notte sarà buona senza te?  
Non dimmi buona notte; chè tu sai  
La notte sa star buona da per sè.

Solinga, scura, cupa, senza speme,  
La notte, quando Lilla m'abbandona;  
Pei cuori che si batton insieme  
Ogni notte, senza dirla, sarà buona.

Come male buona notte si suona  
Con sospiri e parole interrotte!—  
Il modo di aver la notte buona  
È mai non di dir la buona notte.

[Addressed outside],  
LEIGH HUNT, Esq.,  
Vale of Health,  
Hampstead,  
London,  
Angleterre.

## 428. TO HORACE SMITH

PISA,

Sept. 14, 1821.

MY DEAR SMITH,

I cannot express the pain and disappointment with which I learn the change in your plans, no less than the afflicting cause of it.<sup>1</sup> Florence will no longer have any attractions for me this winter, and I shall contentedly sit down in this humdrum Pisa, and refer to hope and to chance the pleasure I had expected from your society this winter. What shall I do with your packages, which have now, I believe, all arrived at Guebhard's at Leghorn? Is it not possible that a favourable change in Mrs. Smith's health might produce a corresponding change in your determinations, and would it, or would it not, be premature to forward the packages to your present residence, or to London? I will pay every possible attention to your instructions in this regard.

I had marked down several houses in Florence, and one especially on the Arno, a most lovely place, though they asked rather more than perhaps you would have chosen to pay—yet nothing approaching to an English price.—I do not yet entirely give you up.—Indeed, I should be sorry not to hope that Mrs. Smith's state of health would not [sic] soon become such as to remove your principal objection to this delightful climate. I have not, with the exception of three or four days, suffered in the least from the heat this year. Though it is but fair to confess that my temperament approaches to that of the salamander.

We expect Lord Byron here in about a fortnight. I have just taken the finest palace in Pisa for him, and his luggage, and his horses, and all his train, are, I believe, already on their way hither. I dare say you have heard

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<sup>1</sup> Horace Smith had written to Shelley saying that owing to the illness of his wife, he had decided not to visit Italy, but had taken a house at Versailles.

of the life he led at Venice, rivalling the wise Solomon almost, in the number of his concubines. Well, he is now quite reformed, and is leading a most sober and decent life, as cavaliere servente to a very pretty Italian woman, who has already arrived at Pisa, with her father and her brother (such are the manners of Italy), as the jackals of the lion. He is occupied in forming a new drama, and, with views which I doubt not will expand as he proceeds, is determined to write a series of plays, in which he will follow the French tragedians and Alfieri, rather than those of England and Spain, and produce something new, at least, to England. This seems to me the wrong road; but genius like his is destined to lead and not to follow. He will shake off his shackles as he finds they cramp him. I believe he will produce something very great; and that familiarity with the dramatic power of human nature will soon enable him to soften down the severe and unharmonising traits of his "Marino Faliero." I think you know Lord Byron personally, or is it your brother? If the latter, I know that he wished particularly to be introduced to you, and that he will sympathise, in some degree, in this great disappointment which I feel in the change, or, as I yet hope, in the prorogation of your plans.

I am glad you like "Adonais," and, particularly, that you do not think it metaphysical, which I was afraid it was. I was resolved to pay some tribute of sympathy to the unhonoured dead, but I wrote, as usual, with a total ignorance of the effect that I should produce.—I have not yet seen your pastoral drama; if you have a copy, could you favour me with it? It will be six months before I shall receive it from England. I have heard it spoken of with high praise, and I have the greatest curiosity to see it.

The Gisbornes promised to buy me some books in Paris, and I had asked you to be kind enough to advance them what they might want to pay for them. I cannot conceive why they did not execute this little commission for me,

as they knew how very much I wished to receive these books by the same conveyance as the filtering-stone. Dare I ask you to do me the favour to buy them? *A complete edition of the works of Calderon*, and the French translation of Kant, a German Faust, and to add the "Nympholept"?<sup>1</sup>—I am indifferent as to a little more or less expense, so that I may have them immediately. I will send you an order on Paris for the amount, together with the thirty-two francs you were kind enough to pay for me.

All public attention is now centred on the wonderful revolution in Greece. I dare not, after the events of last winter, hope that slaves can become freemen so cheaply; yet I know one Greek of the highest qualities, both of courage and conduct, the Prince Mavrocordato, and if the rest be like him, all will go well.—The news of this moment is, that the Russian army has orders to advance.

Mrs. S. unites with me in the most heartfelt regret. And I remain, my dear Smith,

Most faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

If you happen to have brought a copy of Clarke's edition of "Queen Mab" for me, I should like very well to see it.—I really hardly know what this poem is about. I am afraid it is rather rough.

#### 429. TO CHARLES OLLIER

PISA,

September 25, 1821.

DEAR SIR,

It will give me great pleasure if I can arrange the affair of Mrs. Shelley's novel with you to her and your

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<sup>1</sup> A volume of poems by Horace Smith with the following title :—*"Amarnthus, the Nympholept: a pastoral drama, in three acts. With other poems. 1821."* On p. 214 there is a poem, "To Percy Bysshe Shelley, Esq., on his poems."

satisfaction. She has a specific purpose in the sum which she instructed me to require ; and although this purpose could not be answered without ready money, yet I should find means to answer her wishes in that point, if you could make it convenient to pay one-third at Christmas, and give bills for the other two-thirds at twelve and eighteen months. It would give me peculiar satisfaction that you, rather than any other person, should be the publisher of this work ; it is the product of no slight labour, and, I flatter myself, of no common talent. I doubt it will give no less credit than it will receive from your names. I trust you know me too well to believe that my judgment deliberately given in testimony of the value of any production is influenced by motives of interest or partiality.

The romance is called "Castruccio, Prince of Lucca," and is founded (not upon the novel of Macchiavelli under that name, which substitutes a childish fiction for the far more romantic truth of history, but) upon the actual story of his life. He was a person who, from an exile and an adventurer, after having served in the wars of England and Flanders in the reign of our Edward the Second, returned to his native city, and, liberating it from its tyrants, became himself its tyrant, and died in the full splendour of his dominion, which he had extended over the half of Tuscany. He was a little Napoleon, and, with a dukedom instead of an empire for his theatre, brought upon the same all the passions and the errors of his antitype. The chief interest of his romance rests upon Euthanasia, his betrothed bride, whose love for him is only equalled by her enthusiasm for the liberty of the republic of Florence, which is in some sort her country, and for that of Italy, to which Castruccio is a devoted enemy, being an ally of the party of the Emperor. This character is a masterpiece ; and the keystone of the drama, which is built up with admirable art, is the conflict between these passions and these principles. Euthanasia, the last survivor of a noble house, is a feudal countess, and her castle is the

scene of the exhibition of the knightly manners of the time. The character of Beatrice, the prophetess, can only be done justice to in the very language of the author. I know nothing in Walter Scott's novels which at all approaches to the beauty and sublimity of this—creation, I may almost say, for it is perfectly original; and, although founded upon the ideas and manners of the age which is represented, is wholly without a similitude in any fiction I ever read. Beatrice is in love with Castruccio, and dies; for the romance although interspersed with much lighter matter, is deeply tragic, and the shades darken and gather as the catastrophe approaches. All the manners, customs, opinions, of the age are introduced; the superstitions, the heresies, and the religious persecutions are displayed; the minutest circumstance of Italian manners in that age is not omitted; and the whole seems to me to constitute a living and a moving picture of an age almost forgotten. The author visited the scenery which she describes in person; and one or two of the inferior characters are drawn from her own observation of the Italians, for the national character shows itself still in certain instances under the same forms as it wore in the time of Dante.<sup>1</sup> The novel consists, as I told you before, of three volumes, each at least equal to one of the "Tales of my Landlord," and they will be very soon ready to be sent. In case you should accept the present offer, I will make one observation which I consider of essential importance. It ought to be printed in half volumes at a time, and sent to the author for her last corrections by the post. It may be printed

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<sup>1</sup> "The book here alluded to was ultimately published under the title of 'Valperga.' Mrs. Shelley received £400 for the copyright; and this sum was generously devoted to the relief of Godwin's pecuniary difficulties. In a letter to Mrs. Gisborne, dated June 30th, 1821, Mrs. Shelley says that she first formed the conception at Marlow; that this took a more definite shape at Naples; that the work was delayed several times; and that it was 'a child of a mighty slow growth.' It was also, she says, a work of labour, as she had read and consulted a great many books."—Lady Shelley's note.

on thin paper like that of this letter, and the expense shall fall upon me. Lord Byron has his works sent in this manner; and no person, who has either fame to lose or money to win, ought to publish in any other manner.

By-the-bye, how do I stand with regard to these two great objects of human pursuit? I *once* sought something nobler and better than either; but I might as well have reached at the moon, and now, finding that I have grasped the air, I should not be sorry to know what substantial sum, especially of the former, is in your hands on my account. The gods have made the reviewers the almoners of this worldly dross, and I think I must write an ode to flatter them to give me some; if I would not that they put me off with a bill on posterity, which, when my ghost shall present, the answer will be—"no effects."

"Charles the First" is conceived, but not born. Unless I am sure of making something good, the play will not be written. Pride, that ruined Satan, will kill "Charles the First," for his midwife would be only *less than him whom thunder has made greater*. I am full of great plans; and, if I should tell you them, I should add to the list of these riddles.

I have not seen Mr. Procter's "Mirandola." Send it me in the box, and pray send me the box immediately. It is of the utmost consequence; and, as you are so obliging as to say you will not neglect my commissions, pray send this without delay. I hope it *is* sent, indeed, and that you have recollected to send me several copies of "Prometheus," the "Revolt of Islam," and "The Cenci," etc., as I requested you. Is there any chance of a second edition of the "Revolt of Islam"? I could materially improve that poem on revision. The "Adonais," in spite of its mysticism, is the least imperfect of my compositions, and, as the image of my regret and honour for poor Keats, I wish it to be so. I shall write to you, probably, by next post on the subject of that poem, and should have sent the promised criticism for the second edition, had I not

mislaid, and in vain sought for, the volume that contains "Hyperion." Pray give me notice against what time you want the second part of my "Defence of Poetry." I give you this Defence, and you may do what you will with it.

Pray give me an immediate answer about the novel.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your very obliged servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

I ought to tell you that the novel has not the smallest tincture of any peculiar theories in politics or religion.

#### 430. TO LEIGH HUNT

PISA,

October 6, 1821.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I wrote yesterday evening in haste to your brother, imagining that you must have set off,<sup>1</sup> and wishing to reassure him on the subject of money.—I write again to-day, because I find that yesterday was not post-day, and I am in hopes that this letter may arrive in time enough. First of all then,—welcome, and thanks, and take our love and anxious wishes for the companions of your journey,—Secondly, let me advise you upon one or two things.

You would do well to come by sea instead of crossing France at this season of the year,—and if you do cross France by no means venture to pass the Alps so late, but

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<sup>1</sup> Peacock states in a footnote to Shelley's letter to him of Jan. 11, 1822, that Leigh "Hunt and his family were to have embarked for Italy in September, 1821, but the vessel was delayed till the 16th of November. [She set sail at Blackwall on November 15.] They were detained three weeks by bad weather at Ramsgate, and were beaten up and down channel till the 22nd of December, when they put in at Dartmouth. Mrs. Hunt being too ill to proceed, they went to Plymouth, resumed their voyage in another vessel on the 13th of May, 1822, and arrived at Leghorn about the end of June, having been nine months from the time of their engagement with the first vessel in finding their way to Italy. In the present days of railways and steam navigation, this reads like a modern version of the return of Ulysses."



go directly from Paris to Marseilles, and embark at that town for Leghorn, which is within two hours drive of Pisa. But it would be far better to embark at London for Leghorn direct. At this season, westerly and north-westerly winds may be expected to prevail, and although the usual average passage is three weeks, I know a person who made it in twelve days.—It were of use if you could bring your beds, and by no means neglect to put up your linen, knives and forks, spoons, or any other matter of that kind, as it will make a material difference in your expenses here. In case you come by sea bring all the furniture you can,—and if you come by France *send* your beds, your piano, etc., but not tables, chairs, etc.—because freightage is not paid by weight but by room.—Address your packages to the care of Mr. Guebhard, Merchant, Leghorn. In addition—write exactly *when* we are to expect you. This is of the last consequence as to cheapness, because it is necessary we should make some arrangement about your lodgings; and tell us what furniture you have, and whether any.

Lord Byron is expected every day, and I know will be delighted to hear of your coming. —He has a fine palace, and will have a splendid establishment here: that's the sort of thing he likes. Hogg will be inconsolable at your departure. I wish you could bring him with you—he will say that I am like Lucifer who has seduced the third part of the starry flock.

If the letter arrives in time pray bring me a perfect copy of the *Indicator* and a copy of Clarke's "Queen Mab."—I have little hope that this letter will reach you.

All good spirits be your guide.

Your most affectionate

S.

## 431. TO JOHN GISBORNE

PISA,<sup>1</sup>

October 22, 1821.

MY DEAR GISBORNE,

At length the post brings a welcome letter from you, and I am pleased to be assured of your health and safe arrival. I expect with interest and anxiety the intelligence of your progress in England, and how far the advantages there compensate the loss of Italy. I hear from Hunt that he is determined on emigration, and if I thought the letter would arrive in time, I should beg you to suggest some advice to him. But you ought to be incapable of forgiving me in the fact of depriving England of what it must lose when Hunt departs.

Did I tell you that Lord Byron comes to settle at Pisa, and that he has a plan of writing a periodical work in connection with Hunt? His house, Madame Felichi's, is already taken and fitted up for him, and he has been expected every day these six weeks. La Guiccioli, who awaits him impatiently, is a very pretty, sentimental, innocent Italian, who has sacrificed an immense fortune for the sake of Lord Byron, and who, if I know anything of my friend, of her and of human nature, will hereafter have plenty of leisure and opportunity to repent her rashness. Lord Byron is, however, quite cured of his gross habits, as far as habits; the perverse ideas on which they were formed are not yet eradicated.

We have furnished a house at Pisa, and mean to make it our head-quarters. I shall get all my books out, and entrench myself like a spider in a web. If you can assist P[eacock] in sending them to Leghorn, you would do me

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<sup>1</sup> Prof. Dowden says that the Shelleys "had left the Baths and had entered (on October 25) the new apartment that they had furnished for themselves at the top of the Tre Palazzi di Chiesa, on the Lung' Arno, just opposite Byron's prouder dwelling-place."—"Life of Shelley," Vol. II, p. 445,

an especial favour; but do not buy me Calderon, Faust, or Kant, as H[orace] S[mith] promises to send them me from Paris, where I suppose you had not time to procure them. Any other books you or Henry<sup>1</sup> think would accord with my design, Ollier will furnish you with.

I should like very much to hear what is said of my "Adonais," and you would oblige me by cutting out, or making Ollier cut out, any respectable criticism on it and sending it me; you know I do not mind a crown or two in postage. The *Epipsychidion* is a mystery; as to real flesh and blood, you know that I do not deal in those articles; you might as well go to a gin-shop for a leg of mutton, as expect anything human or earthly from me. I desired Ollier not to circulate this piece except to the *σωφροῦς*, and even they, it seems, are inclined to approximate me to the circle of a servant girl and her sweetheart. but I intend to write a Symposium of my own to set all this right.

I am just finishing a dramatic poem, called "Hellas,"<sup>2</sup> upon the contest now raging in Greece—a sort of imitation of the "Persæ of Æschylus, full of lyrical poetry. I try to be what I might have been, but am not successful. I find that (I dare say I shall quote wrong)

"Den herrlichsten, den sich der Geist emprangt  
Drangt immer fremd und fremder Stoff sich an."

The *Edinburgh Review* lies. Godwin's answer to Malthus is victorious and decisive; and that it should not be generally acknowledged as such, is full of evidence of the influence of successful evil and tyranny. What Godwin is, compared to Plato and Lord Bacon, we well know;

<sup>1</sup> Henry Reveley.

<sup>2</sup> The title of the last book of Shelley's published during his lifetime is as follows: "Hellas / A Lyrical Drama / By / Percy B. Shelley / ΜΑΝΤΙΣ ΕΙΜ' ΕΣΘΛΟΝ ΑΓΝΩΝ / Oedip. Colon. / London / Charles and James Ollier, Vere Street / Bond Street / MDCCCXXII." The volume also contains the poem "Written on hearing the News of the Death of Napoleon."

but compared with these miserable sciolists, he is a vulture to a worm.

I read the Greek dramatists and Plato for ever. You are right about Antigone; how sublime a picture of a woman! and what think you of the choruses, and especially the lyrical complaints of the godlike victim? and the menaces of Tiresias, and their rapid fulfilment? Some of us have, in a prior existence, been in love with an Antigone, and that makes us find no full content in any mortal tie. As to books, I advise you to live near the British Museum, and read there. I have read, since I saw you, the "*Jungfrau von Orleans*" of Schiller,—a fine play, if the fifth act did not fall off. Some Greeks, escaped from the defeat in Wallachia, have passed through Pisa to re-embark at Leghorn for the Morea; and the Tuscan Government allowed them, during their stay and passage, three lire each per day and their lodging; that is good. Remember me and Mary most kindly to Mrs. Gisborne and Henry, and believe me,

Yours most affectionately,  
P. B. S.

432. TO CHARLES OLLIER  
(London)

PISA,  
Nov[ember] 11, 1821.

DEAR SIR,

I send you the drama of "*Hellas*," relying on your assurance that you will be good enough to pay immediate attention to my literary requests. What little interest this poem may ever excite, depends upon its immediate publication; I entreat you, therefore, to have the goodness to send the MS. instantly to a printer, and the moment you get a proof despatch it to me by the post. The whole might be sent at once. Lord Byron has his poem sent to him in this manner, and I cannot see that the inferiority

in the composition of a poem can affect the powers of a printer in the matter of despatch, etc. If any passages should alarm you in the notes, you are at liberty to suppress them; the poem contains nothing of a tendency to danger.

Do not forget my other questions. I am especially curious to hear the fate of "Adonais." I confess I should be surprised if *that* poem were born to an immortality of oblivion.

Within a few days I may have to write to you on a subject of greater interest. Meanwhile, I rely on your kindness for carrying my present request into immediate effect.

Dear Sir,

Your very faithful servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

I need not impress on you the propriety of giving a speedy answer to Mrs. S[helley]'s proposal. Her volumes are now ready for the press. The "Ode to Napoleon" to print at the end.

#### 433. To JOSEPH SEVERN

PISA,

November 29, 1821.

DEAR SIR,

I send you the Elegy on poor Keats—and I wish it were better worth your acceptance. You will see, by the preface, that it was written before I could obtain any particular account of his last moments; all that I still know was communicated to me by a friend who had derived his information from Colonel Finch; I have ventured to express as I felt the respect and admiration which *your* conduct towards him demands.

In spite of his transcendent genius, Keats never was, or ever will be, a popular poet and the total neglect and obscurity in which the astonishing remnants of his mind still lie, was hardly to be dissipated by a writer,

who, however he may differ from Keats in more important qualities, at least resembles him in that accidental one, a want of popularity.

I have little hope, therefore, that the poem I send you will excite any attention, nor do I feel assured, that a critical notice of his writings would find a single reader. But for these considerations, it had been my intention to have collected the remnants of his compositions, and to have published them with a life and criticism.—Has he left any poems or writings of whatsoever kind, and in whose possession are they? Perhaps you would oblige me by information on this point.

Many thanks for the picture you promise me: I shall consider it amongst the most sacred relics of the past.

For my part, I little expected, when I last saw Keats at my friend Leigh Hunt's, that I should survive him.

Should you ever pass through Pisa, I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you, and of cultivating an acquaintance into something pleasant, begun under such melancholy auspices.

Accept, my dear sir, the assurances of my sincere esteem, and believe me,

Your most sincere and faithful servant,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

Do you know Leigh Hunt? I expect him and his family *here* every day.

#### 434. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT

(Florence)

PISA,

Dec[ember] 11, 1821.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I should be very glad to receive a confidential letter from you—one totally the reverse of those I write you; detailing all your present occupation and intimacies, and giving me some insight into your future plans. Do not

think that my affection and anxiety for you ever cease, or that I ever love you less although that love has been and still must be a source of disquietude to me.

The Exotic as you please to call me droops in this frost—a frost both moral and physical—a solitude of the heart. These last days I have been unable to ride, the cold towards sunset is so excessive and my side reminding me that I am mortal. Medwin rides almost constantly with Lord B[yron], and the party sometimes consists of Gamba, Taaffe, Medwin and the Exotic who unfortunately belonging to the order of mimosa, thrives ill in so large a society. I cannot endure the company of many persons, and the society of one is either great pleasure or great pain.

We expect the Hunts every day, but I suppose the tramontana is a fresh wind at Sea and detains them. I think I told you they were to live at Lord B[yron]'s.

The news of the Greeks continues to be more and more glorious. It may be said that the Peloponnesus is entirely free, and that Mavrocordato has been acting a distinguished part, and will probably fill a high rank in the magistracy of the infant republic.

What are you doing in German? I have read none since we met, nor probably until we meet again—should that ever be—shall I read it.

I am employed in nothing—I read—but I have no spirits for serious composition—I have no confidence, and to write in solitude or put forth thoughts without sympathy is unprofitable vanity.

Tell me dearest what you mean to do, and if it should give you pleasure come and live with us. The Williams's always speak of you with praise and affection, and regret very much that you did not spend this winter with them, but neither their regret nor their affection equal mine.

Yours ever,

S.

[Addressed outside],

Miss CLAIRMONT,

Presso al Prof. BOJRI,

Dirempetto Palazzo Pitti, Firenze.

## 435. TO LORD BYRON

THURSDAY MORNING (12 Dec., 1821).

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,

I hear this morning that the design which certainly had been in contemplation of burning my fellow-serpent has been abandoned, and that he has been condemned to the galleys. Lord Guilford is at Leghorn; and as your courier applied to me to know whether he ought to leave your letter for him or not, I have thought it best, since this information, to tell him to take it back.<sup>1</sup>

Ever faithfully yours,

P. B. SHELLEY.

## 436. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT

(Florence)

PISA,

December 31 (1821).

[Postmark, 1 January (1822).]

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I returned from Leghorn on Friday evening, but too late for the Post, or you should have heard from me. The

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<sup>1</sup> On the back of this letter Byron wrote the following: "Dear M[oores], I send you the two notes which will tell you the story I allude to of the *auto-da-fé*. Shelley's allusion to his 'fellow-serpent' is a buffoonery of mine. Goethe's 'Mephistofeles' calls the Serpent who tempted Eve 'my Aunt the renowned Snake,' and I always insist that Shelley is nothing but one of her Nephews walking about on the tip of his tail. BYRON." A rumour had reached Shelley that to use Byron's own words, the Infanta of Lucca, "had actually condemned a poor devil to the stake, for stealing the wafer-box out of a church. Shelley and I of course were up in arms against this piece of piety, and have been disturbing everybody to get the sentence changed. Taaffe has gone to see what can be done." When he returned the true facts of the story appeared to be that the criminal, a priest, had given himself up at Florence, where it was decided that he should only be handed over to the authorities at Lucca on condition that he was dealt with according to the Tuscan law.



expected person had not arrived, having been detained by the tremendous weather. I hope soon to have more satisfactory intelligence. Your desires on this subject are the object of my anxious thought.

Mary desires me to say (not that she sees this letter or any of yours addressed to me) that she would have written to you—but she has been very unwell. She has suffered dreadfully from rheumatism in her head, to such a degree as for some successive nights entirely to deprive her of sleep. She is now, by dint of blisters and laudanum, somewhat better. I have suffered considerably from pain and depression of spirits. The weather has been frightful here. Torrents of rain have swollen the Arno to a greater degree than has been known for many years; the fury of the torrent is inconceivably great. The wind was beyond anything I ever remember, and all the shores of the Mediterranean are strewn with wrecks. The damage sustained at Genoa and the number of lives lost, has been immense; the ships suspected of pestilence have been driven from their moorings into the town, and everything coming from Genoa has been subjected to a strict quarantine. Three mails from France are due, and a thousand contradictory rumours are afloat as to the cause. You may imagine, and I am sure you will share, our anxiety about poor Hunt. I wonder, and am shocked at my insensibility, that I can sleep or enjoy one moment of peace until I hear of his safety. I shall, of course, write to tell you the moment of his arrival—I know you will be anxious about these poor people. The ship in which they sailed was spoken with in the Bay of Biscay, and was then quite safe.—We have little new in politics. You will have heard of the amphibious state of things in France, and the establishment of the Ultra-Ministry by the preponderance afforded, to that party by the coalition of the Liberals with it. The Greeks are going on excellently, and those massacres at Smyrna and Constantinople import nothing to the stability of the cause. There is no such thing as

a rebellion in Ireland, or anything that looks like it. The people are indeed stung to madness by the oppression of the Irish system, and there is no such thing as getting rents or taxes even at the point of the bayonet throughout the southern provinces. But there are no regular bodies of men in opposition to the government, nor have the people any leaders. In England all bears for the moment the aspect of a sleeping volcano.

You do not tell me, my dearest Clare, anything of your plans, although you bid me be secret with respect to them. Assure yourself, my best friend, that anything you *seriously* enjoin me, that may be necessary for your happiness will be strictly observed by me. Write to me explicitly your projects and expectations. 'You know in some respects my sentiments both with regard to them and you. I have been once, after enduring much solicitation, to Mrs. Beauclerc's, who did me the favour to caress me exceedingly. Unless she calls on Mary, I shall not repeat my visit. Do you know her?

Should you take it into your head to call on Molini for me, let not Calderon having been sent or be an objection—I want a Calderon. Adieu.

Ever most faithfully yours,  
S.

Mrs. Mason told me to say she does not write because I do.

[Addressed outside],  
Miss CLAIRMONT,  
Presso al Prof. BOITI,  
Dirimpetto al Palazzo Pitti,  
Firenza.

#### 437. TO THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK

Pisa,

January (probably 11), 1822.

MY DEAR PEACOCK,

Circumstances have prevented my procuring the certificate and signature which I inclose, so soon as I expected,

and other circumstances made me even then delay. I inclose them, and should be much obliged by your sending them to their destination.—I am still at Pisa, where I have at length fitted up some rooms at the top of a lofty palace that overlooks the city and the surrounding region, and have collected books and plants about me, and established myself for some indefinite time, which, if I read the future, will not be short. I wish you to send my books by the very first opportunity, and I expect in them a great augmentation of comfort. Lord Byron is established here, and we are constant companions. No small relief this, after the dreary solitude of the understanding and the imagination in which we past (*sic*) the first years of our expatriation, yoked to all sorts of miseries and discomforts.

Of course you have seen his last volume, and if you before thought him a great poet, what is your opinion now that you have read "Cain?" The "Foscari" and "Sardanapalus" I have not seen; but as they are in the style of his later writings, I doubt not they are very fine. We expect Hunt here every day, and remain in great anxiety on account of the heavy gales which he must have encountered at Christmas. Lord Byron has fitted up the lower apartments of his palace for him, and Hunt will be agreeably surprised to find a commodious lodging prepared for him after the fatigues and dangers of his passage. I have been long idle, and, as far as writing goes, despondent; but I am now engaged in "Charles the First," and a devil of a nut it is to crack.

Mary and Clara, (who is not with us just at present,) are well, and so is our little boy, the image of poor William. We live, as usual, tranquilly. I get up, or at least wake, early; read and write till two; dine; go to Lord B.'s, and ride, or play at billiards, as the weather permits; and sacrifice the evening either to light books or whoever happens to drop in. Our furniture, which is very neat, cost fewer shillings than that at Marlow did pounds sterling;

and our windows are full of plants, which turn the sunny winter into spring. My health is better—my cares are lighter ; and although nothing will cure the consumption of my pulse, yet it drags on a sort of life in death, very like its master, and seems, like Fortunatus's, always empty yet never quite exhausted. You will have seen my "Adonais," and perhaps my "Hellas," and I think, whatever you may judge of the subject, the composition of the first poem will not wholly displease you. I wish I had something better to do than furnish this jingling food for the hunger of oblivion, called verse but I have not ; and since you give me no encouragement about India,<sup>1</sup> I cannot hope to have.

How is your little star, and the heaven which contains the milky way in which it glimmers ?

Adieu—Yours ever, most truly,

S.

438. TO CHARLES AND JAMES OLLIER

(London)

PISA,

Jan[uary] 11, 1821 [1822].

DEAR SIRS,

I cannot but express my surprise at the silence you have thought proper to observe respecting the various subjects on which I have written to you in the course of the last six months.—My only motive in breaking it on the present occasion is to inform you that, considering

<sup>1</sup> "He had expressed a desire to be employed politically at the court of a native prince, and I had told him that such employment was restricted to the regular service of the East India Company."—Peacock's note.

your total neglect as a [negative ?] upon my last [modification] of the proposal for Mrs. Shelley's novel—I have sent it to Mr. Godwin with liberty to dispose of it to the best advantage, and should you be still desirous of publishing it, you may treat with him for the copyright.—You will at once see how little reason you have to complain of this conduct on my part when I tell you that two months elapsed between the completion of the novel and its being sent to England in expectation of your answer.

With respect to my own publications.—I had exceedingly desired the immediate publication of "Hellas" from public no less than private reasons; but as post-day after post-day passes and I receive no proof-sheets of it as I had requested, I suppose I might as well not have relied upon your spontaneous offers to execute my commissions.—

I was also more than commonly interested in the [success] of "Adonais";—I do not mean the sale, but the effect produced—and I should have [been] glad to have received some communication from you respecting it.—I do not know even, whether it has been published, and still less whether it has been republished with the alterations I sent.

The Historical Tragedy of "Charles the First" will be ready by the Spring. It is my intention to sell the copyright of this poem. As you have always been my publisher, I give you the refusal of it.—My reason for selling it, to speak frankly, is, that the Bookseller should have sufficient interest in its success to give it a fair chance. Should you not think it worth while to make any offer for it; of course you will absolve me from levity in applying to another publisher. I ought to say that the Tragedy promises to be good, as Tragedies go; and that it is not coloured by the party spirit of the author: How far it may be popular I cannot judge.

Should you pay the same attention to my present letter as its late predecessors have received from you, you will

scarcely think it extraordinary that this should be the last time I intend to trouble you.

Dear Sirs, I have the honour to be,  
Your obedient humble sert.,  
PERCY B. SHELLEY.

Messrs. OLLIER & Co., Booksellers,  
Vere Street, Bond Street, London, Angleterre.

[The postmark on the letter bears the date "Ja-26, 1822."]

#### 439. To JOHN GISBORNE

PISA,  
January, 1822.

One thing I rejoice to hear, that your health is better. So is mine; but my mind is like an overworked race-horse put into a hackney coach.—What think you of Lord Byron now? Space wondered less at the swift and fair creations of God, when he grew weary of vacancy, than I at this spirit of an angel in the mortal paradise of a decaying body. So I think, let the world envy while it admires, as it may.

We have just got the etchings of "Faust,"<sup>1</sup> the painter is worthy of Goëthe. The meeting of him and Margaret is wonderful. It makes all the pulses of my head beat—those of my heart have been quiet long ago. The translations, both these and in *Blackwood* are miserable. Ask Coleridge if their stupid misintelligence of the deep wisdom and harmony of the author does not spur him to action. You will have heard of the Hunts, and of all my perplexities about them. The Williams's are well. Mrs. W[illiams], more amiable and beautiful than ever, and a sort of spirit of embodied peace in the midst of our circle of tempests. So much for first impressions!

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich August Moritz Retzsch (1779-1857), whose outline etchings illustrating the first part of "Faust" were published in 1820; he produced other designs of a similar character to illustrate the works of Schiller, Fouqué and Shakespeare. See p. 954.

## 440. TO HORACE SMITH

PISA,

25 January, 1822.

MY DEAR SMITH,

I have delayed this fortnight answering your kind letter because I was in treaty for a Calderon, which at last I have succeeded in procuring at a tolerably moderate price. All the other books you mention I should be glad to have ; together with whatever others might fall in your way that you might think interesting.

Will you not think my exactions upon your kindness interminable if I ask you to execute another commission for me ? It is to buy a good pedal harp, without great ornament or any appendage that would unnecessarily increase the expense—but good ; nor should I object to its being second-hand, if that were equally compatible with its being despatched immediately. Together with the harp I should wish for five or six napoleons' worth of harp music, at your discretion. I do not know the price of harps at Paris, but I suppose that from seventy to eighty guineas would cover it, and I must trust to your accustomed kindness, as I want it for a present, to make the immediate advance, as if I were to delay, the grace of my compliment would be lost. Do not take much trouble about it, but simply take what you find, if you are so exceedingly kind as to oblige me. It had better be sent by Marseilles, through some merchant or in any other manner you think best, addressed to me at Messrs. Guebhard & Co., merchants, Leghorn ; the books may be sent together with it.

Our party at Pisa is the same as when I wrote last. Lord Byron unites us at a weekly dinner, when my nerves are generally shaken to pieces by sitting up contemplating the rest making themselves vats of claret, etc., till three o'clock in the morning. We regret *your* absence exceedingly, and Lord Byron has desired me to convey his best

remembrances to you. I imagine it is *you*, and not your brother, for whom they are intended. Hunt was expected, and Lord Byron had fitted up a part of his palace for his accommodation, when we heard that the late violent storms had forced him to put back; and that nothing could induce Marianne to put to sea again. This, for many reasons that I cannot now explain, has produced a chaos of perplexities. . . . The reviews and journals, they say, continue to attack me, but I value neither the fame they can give nor the fame they can take away, therefore blessed be the name of the reviewers.

Pray, if possible, let the "Nympholept" be included in the package.

Believe me, my dear Smith,

Your most obliged and affectionate friend,

P. B. SHELLEY.

#### 441. TO LEIGH HUNT

PISA,

Jan[uary] 25, 1822.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I send you by return of post £150,—within 30 or 40 of what I had contrived to scrape together. How I am to assemble the constituents of such a sum again I do not at present see; but do not be disheartened,—we will all put our shoulders to the wheel. Let me not speak of my own disappointment, which, great as it is in not seeing you here, is all swallowed up in sympathy with your present situation. Our anxiety during the continuance of the succession of tempests which one morning seemed to rain lightnings into Pisa, and amongst others struck the palace adjoining Lord Byron's, and turned the Arno into a raging sea, was, as you may conceive, excessive, and our first relief was your letter from Ramsgate. Between the interval of that and your letter of December



28, we were in daily expectation of your arrival. Yesterday arrived that dated January 6.

Lord Byron has assigned you a portion of his palace, and Mary and I had occupied ourselves in furnishing it. Everything was already provided, except bedding, which could have been got in a moment, and which we thought it possible you might bring with you. We had hired a woman cook of the country for you, who is still with us. Lord B[yrone] had kindly insisted upon paying the upholsterer's bill, with that sort of unsuspecting goodness which makes it infinitely difficult to ask him for more. Past circumstances between Lord B[yrone] and me render it *impossible* that I should accept any supply from him for my own use, or that I should ask it for yours if the contribution could be supposed in any manner to relieve me, or to do what I could otherwise have done. It is true that I cannot, but how is he to be assured of this?

One thing strikes me as *possible*. I am at present writing the drama of "Charles the First," a play which, if completed according to my present idea, will hold a higher rank than "The Cenci" as a work of art. Would no bookseller give me £150 or £200 for the copyright of this play? You know best how my writings sell, whether at all or not: after they failed of making the sort of impression on men that I expected, I have never until now thought it worth while to inquire. The question is now interesting to me, inasmuch as the reputation depending on their sale might induce a bookseller to give me such a sum for this play. Write to Allman,<sup>1</sup> your bookseller, tell him what I tell you of "Charles the First," and do not delay a post. I have a parcel of little poems also, the "Witch of Atlas," and some translations of Homer's Hymns, the copyright of which I must sell. I offered the "Charles the First" to Ollier, and you had better write at the same

<sup>1</sup> Leigh Hunt's book, "Amyntas," was published by T. & J. Allman, in 1820.

time to learn his terms. Of course you will not delay a post in this.

The evils of your remaining in England are inconceivably great if you ultimately determine upon Italy; and in the latter case, the best thing you can do is, without waiting for the spring, to set sail with the very first ship you can. Debts, responsibilities, and expenses will enmesh you round about if you delay, and force you back into that circle from which I made a push to draw you. The winter generally, is not a bad time for sailing, but only that period which you selected, and another when the year approaches to the vernal equinox. You avoided—and if you must still delay, will still avoid—the halcyon days of the Mediterranean. There is no serious danger in a cargo of gunpowder, hundreds of ships navigate these electrical seas with that freight without risk. Marianne would have been benefited, and would still benefit exceedingly, by the Elysian temperature of the Mediterranean.

Poor Marianne! how much I feel for her, and with what anxiety I expect your news of her health! Were it not for the cursed necessity of finding money, all considerations would be swallowed up in the thought of her; and I should be delighted to think that she had obtained this interval of repose which now perplexes and annoys me. . . .

Pray tell me in answer to this letter, unless you answer it in person, what arrangement you have made about the receipt of a regular income from the profits of the *Examiner*. You ought not to leave England without having the assurance of an independence in this particular; as many difficulties have presented themselves to the plan imagined by Lord Byron, which I depend upon you for getting rid of.<sup>1</sup> And if there is time to write before you set off, pray

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<sup>1</sup> "When he [Byron] consented to join Leigh Hunt and others in writing for the *Liberal*, I think his principal inducement was the belief that John and Leigh Hunt were proprietors of the *Examiner*; so when Leigh Hunt, at Pisa, told him he was no longer connected with that paper, Byron was taken aback, finding Hunt would be entirely dependent upon the hazardous project, while he woul

tell me if Ollicer has published "Hellas," and what effect was produced by "Adonais." My faculties are shaken to atoms, and torpid. I can write nothing; and if "Adonais" had no success, and excited no interest, what incentive can I have to write? As to reviews, don't give Gifford, or his associate Hazlitt, a stripe the more for my sake. The man must be enviably happy whom reviews can make miserable. I have neither curiosity, interest, pain nor pleasure in anything, good or evil, they can say of me. I feel only a slight disgust, and a sort of wonder that they presume to write my name. Send me your satire when it is printed. I began once a "Satire upon Satire,"<sup>1</sup> which I meant to be very severe; it was full of *small knives*, in the use of which practice would soon have made me very expert.<sup>2</sup>

(Postscript by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley)

DEAREST CHILDREN,

I fill up a little empty space of blank paper with many wishes, regrets, and elcs. Stay no longer, I beseech you, in your cloud-environed isle, as cloudy for the soul as for the rest of it. Even friends there are only to be seen through a murky mist, which will not be under the bright sky of dear Italy. My poor Marianne will get well, and you all be lighthearted and happy. Come quickly.

Affectionately yours,

MARY S.

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himself be deprived of that on which he had set his heart—the use of a weekly paper in great circulation." (Trelawny, "Recollections," p. 155.) Dr. Richard Garnett, who prints this extract as a footnote to this letter in his "Relics of Shelley," adds: "It must be remembered, however, that the *Liberal* was a project of Byron's own—see Shelley's letter of August 26, 1821."

<sup>1</sup> Leigh Hunt's "Ultra-Crepidarius: a satire on William Gifford," was not published until 1823.

<sup>2</sup> A fragment of manuscript by Shelley, which appears to be a portion of the "Satire" in question, was published in 1881 by Prof. Dowden in "The Correspondence of Robert Southey and Caroline Bowles."

405A. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT  
(Florence)

[BAGNI DI PISA, Spring, 1821.]<sup>1</sup>

(Written by Mary Shelley)

MY DEAR CLARE,

Shelley and I have been consulting seriously about your letter received this morning, and I wish in as orderly a manner as possible to give you the result of our reflections. First, as to my coming to Florence ; I mentioned it to you first, it is true, but we have so little money, and our calls this quarter for removing, etc., will be so great, that we had entirely given up the idea. If it would be of great utility to you, as a single expense we might do it ; but if it be necessary that others should follow, the crowns would be minus. But before I proceed further in this part of the subject, let me examine what your plans appear to be. Your anxiety for A[llegra]'s health is to a great degree unfounded ; Venice, its stinking canals and dirty streets, is enough to kill any child ; but you ought to know, and any one will tell you so, that the towns of Romagna, situated where Bagnacavallo is, enjoy the best air in Italy — Imola and the neighbouring *paese* are famous ; Bagnacavallo especially, being fifteen miles from the sea and situated on an eminence, is peculiarly salutary. Considering the affair reasonably, A[llegra] is well taken care of there ; she is in good health, and in all probability she will continue so.

No one can more entirely agree with you in thinking that as soon as possible A[llegra] ought to be taken out of the hands of one as remorseless as he is unprincipled. But at the same time it appears to me that the present moment is exactly the one in which this is the most difficult—time cannot add to these difficulties, for they can never be greater. Allow me to enumerate some of those which are peculiar to the present instant. A[llegra] is in a convent,

<sup>1</sup> This undated letter unfortunately has been misplaced. Its correct position would seem to be after No. 405.

where it is next to impossible to get out ; high walls and bolted doors enclose her ; and more than all, the regular habits of a convent, which never permit her to get outside its gates, and would cause her to be missed directly. But you may have a plan for this, and I pass to other objections. At your desire Shelley urged her removal to L[ord] B[yron], and this appears in the highest degree to have exasperated him—he vowed that if you annoyed him he would place A[llegra] in some secret convent ; he declared that you should have nothing to do with her, and that he would move heaven and earth to prevent your interference. L[ord] B[yron] is at present a man of twelve or fifteen thousand a year, he is on the spot, a man reckless of the ill he does others, obstinate to desperation in the pursuance of his plans or his revenge. What then would you do, having A[llegra] on the outside of the convent walls ? Would you go to America ? the money we have not, nor does this seem to be your idea. You probably wish to secrete yourself. But L[ord] B[yron] would use any means to find you out ; and the story he might make up—a man stared at by the Grand-Duke with money at command—and above all on the spot to put energy into every pursuit, would he not find you ? If he did not, he comes upon Shelley—he taxes him ; Shelley must either own it or tell a lie ; in either case he is open to be called upon by L[ord] B[yron] to answer for his conduct—and a duel—I need not enter upon that topic, your imagination may fill up the picture.

On the contrary, a little time, a very little time, may alter much of this. It is more than probable that he will be obliged to go to England within a year<sup>1</sup>—then at a distance he is no longer so formidable. What is certain is that we shall not be so near him another year—he may be reconciled with his wife, and though he may bluster, he may not be sorry to get A[llegra] off his hands ; at any rate

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<sup>1</sup> On business connected with property occasioned by Lady Noel's death.

if we leave him perfectly quiet, he will not be so exasperated, so much on the *qui vive* as he is at present. Nothing remains constant, something may happen—things cannot be worse. Another thing I mention which though sufficiently ridiculous may have some weight with you. Spring is our unlucky season. No spring has passed for us without some piece of ill luck. Remember the first spring at Mrs. Harbottle's.<sup>1</sup> The second, when you became acquainted with L[ord] B[yron]; the third we went to Marlow—no wise thing at least—the fourth, our uncomfortable residence in London—the fifth, our Roman misery—the sixth, Paolo at Pisa—the seventh, a mixture of Emilia and a Chancery suit—now the aspect of the Autumnal Heavens has on the contrary been with few exceptions, favourable to us. What think you of this? It is in your own style, but it has often struck me. Would it not be better therefore, to wait, and to undertake no plan until circumstances bend a little more to us?

Then we are dreadfully behindhand with money at present—Hunt and our furniture has swallowed up more than our savings. You say great sacrifices will be required of us, I could make many to extricate all belonging to me from the hands of L[ord] B[yron], whose hypocrisy and cruelty rouse one's soul from its depths. We are, of course, still in great uncertainty as to our summer residence—we have calculated the great expense of removing our furniture for a few months as far as Spezzia, and it appears to us a bad plan—to get a furnished house we must go nearer Genoa, probably nearer Lord Byron, which is contrary to our most earnest wishes. We have thought of Naples

*(Mary Shelley's part of the letter ends, the rest is in Shelley's handwriting)*

in such an event. Your setting up a school precisely on Miss Field's plan I certainly never approved, because I thought even in Miss Field's case the prices and the whole plan

<sup>1</sup> The death of Mary's first husband in 1815

ridiculously narrow : and the whole affair seemed planned on that plausible scheme of moderation which never succeeds. It was this that I wanted to say to you. But the idea of a school, especially under Mrs. Mason's protection, I confess appeared very plausible to me. I should be glad, in case of transmigration, to leave you under such powerful and such secure protection as her's : it would be one subject less for regret, to me, if I could consider—my death—as no immediate misfortune to you ; as in this case it would not.—The incumbent of my reversion still flourishes ; and you must be aware that the sensations with which it has pleased the Devil to endow the frame of his successor are not the strongest pledges of longevity. You say that I may not have a conversation with you because you may depart in a hurry Heaven knows where—except it be to the other world (and I know the coachman of that road will not let the passengers wait a minute) I know of no mortal business that requires such post haste.

We are now at the Baths in a very nice house looking to the mountains. Mary will tell you all about it. Little Babe is quite well, smiling and good. I am better to-day. I have been very ill, body and soul, but principally the latter.—I took some exercise in the boat to dissipate thought : but it over-fatigued me and made me worse. The Baths, I think, do me good, but especially solitude, and not seeing polite human faces, and hearing voices. I go over about twice a week to see Emilia, who is in better spirits and health than she has been for some time.—Danielli almost frightens her to death, and she handed him over to me to quiet and console.—It seems that I am worthy to take my degree of M.A. in the art of Love, for I have contrived to calm the despairing swain, much to the satisfaction of poor Emilia, who in that convent of hers sees everything as through a mist, ten times its natural size.—The Williams's come sometimes : they have taken Pugnano. W[illiams] I like, and I have got reconciled to Jane.—Mr. Taaffe rides, writes, invites, complains, bows

and apologizes: he would be a mortal bore if he came often. The Greek Prince comes sometimes, and I reproach my own savage disposition that so agreeable, accomplished and amiable a person is not more agreeable to me.

Adieu, my dear Clare,

Ever most affectionately,

S.

[Addressed outside],

A Mademoiselle.

MADIE. DE CLAIRMONT,

Chez M. le Professeur BOJTI,

Florence.

#### 443. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT

[PISA, 1822.]

I have little to add to Mary's letter, my poor dear friend,—and all that I shall do is suspend my journey to take a house until your answer:—Of course, if you do not spend the summer with us I shall come to Florence and see and talk with you. But it seems to me far better on every account that you should resolve on this, and tranquillize yourself among your friends. I shall certainly take our house *far* from Lord Byron's, although it may be impossible suddenly to put an end to his detested intimacy. . My coming to Florence would cost from fifteen to twenty crowns; Mary's much more; and if, therefore, we are to see you soon, this money in our present situation were better spared.

Mary tells you that Lord Byron is obstinate and *awake* about Allegra. My great object has been to lull him into security until circumstances might call him to England. But the idea of contending with him in Italy, and defended by his enormous fortune, is vain. I was endeavouring to induce him to place Allegra in the institute at Lucca, but his jealousy of my regard for *your* interests will, since a conversation that I had with him the other day, render



him inaccessible to my suggestions. It seems to me that you have no other resource but time and chance and change. Heaven knows, whatever sacrifices I could make, how gladly I should make (them) if they could promote your desires about her : it tears my heart to think that all sacrifices are *now* vain. Mary participates in my feelings, but I cannot write. My spirits completely overcome me.

Your ever faithful and affectionate  
S.

Come and stay among us—If you like, come and look for houses with me in our boat—it might distract your mind.

#### 444. TO LORD BYRON

February 15, 1822.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,

I enclose you a letter from Hunt which annoys me on more than one account. You will observe the postscript, and you know me well enough to feel how painful a task is set me in commenting upon it. Hunt had urged me more than once to ask you to lend him this money. My answer consisted in sending him all I could spare, which I have now literally done. Your kindness in fitting up a part of your own house for his accommodation I sensibly felt, and willingly accepted from you on his part, but, believe me, without the slightest intention of imposing, or, if I could help it, allowing to be imposed, any heavier task on your purse. As it has come to this in spite of my exertions, I will not conceal from you the low ebb of my own money affairs in the present moment,—that is, my absolute incapacity of assisting Hunt farther.

I do not think poor Hunt's promise to pay in a given time is worth very much ; but mine is less subject to uncertainty, and I should be happy to be responsible for

any engagement he may have proposed to you.<sup>1</sup> I am so much annoyed by this subject that I hardly know what to write, and much less what to say; and I have need of all your indulgence in judging both my feelings and expressions.

I shall see you by and by. Believe me,

Yours most faithfully and sincerely,

P. B. SHELLEY.

445. TO BROOKES & CO.

(London)

PISA,

Feb[ruary] 20, 1822.

GENTLEMEN,

Since I last wrote to you, a friend of mine who had occasion to transmit £220 to Mr. Leigh Hunt has accommodated me with that sum on the arrangement that I should send him an order on you for the same amount, payable in March: the amount, that is to say, of the ensuing quarter. I have thus in part obtained what I desired, although I should still feel particularly obliged to you if you could put me in the way of rendering my *June* quarter available at present.

You will be so obliging as to pay Mr. Leigh Hunt on his order the amount of my quarter's income due in March.

Gentlemen, I have the honour to be

Your obliged servant,

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

446. TO LEIGH HUNT

(Plymouth)

LEGHORN,

Feb. 23, 1822.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have only a single instant to tell you that I cannot

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<sup>1</sup> Byron lent Leigh Hunt £200, and took Shelley's bond for that sum. See the following letter.

cash Lord Byron's bills for you here under a loss of fifty, to sixty pounds discount, but I will send you an order on Brookes for the rest of the 250, who will pay you on Lady-day.—It was better to wait a week or so, than lose so enormous a percentage.—I have written to Brookes to pay you this, while I keep Lord B.'s bills to answer my engagements and send you this. The additional thirty-six [?] pounds which shall be sent in a few posts you must lose upon, but that is of less moment.—

Remember it is Brookes & Co., Chancery Lane.—Do not apply for payment before the 25th.—

I'll write next post. Kindest love to Marianne,—and pray don't delay in letting me hear how you all are getting on.

Yours very truly,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

[Addressed outside],  
LEIGH HUNT, Esq.,  
Plymouth,  
Devonshire,  
Angleterre.

#### 447. To LEIGH HUNT

PISA,

March 2, 1822.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

My last two or three letters have, I fear, given you some uneasiness, or at least inflicted that portion of it which I felt in writing them. The aspect of affairs has somewhat changed since the date of that in which I expressed a repugnance to a continuance of intimacy with Lord Byron, so close as that which now exists; at least, it has changed so far as regards you and the intended journal. He expresses again the greatest eagerness to undertake it, and proceed with it, as well as the greatest confidence in you as his associate. He is for ever dilating upon his impatience of your delay, and his disappointment at your

not having already arrived. He renews his expressions of disregard for the opinion of those who advised him against this alliance with you, and I imagine it will be no very difficult task to execute that which you have assigned me—to keep him in heart with the project until your arrival. Meanwhile, let my last letters, as far as they regard Lord Byron, be as if they had not been written. Particular circumstances, or rather, I should say, particular dispositions in Lord Byron's character, render the close and exclusive intimacy with him in which I find myself intolerable to me; thus much, my best friend, I will confess and confide to you. No feelings of my own shall injure or interfere with what is now nearest to them—your interest, and I will take care to preserve the little influence I may have over this Proteus in whom such strange extremes are reconciled, until we meet—which we now must, at all events, soon do.

Lord Byron showed me your letter to him, which arrived with mine yesterday. How shall I thank you for your generous and delicate defence and explanation of my motives? I fear no misinterpretation from you, and from anyone else I despise and defy it.

So you think I can make nothing of "Charles the First." *Tanto peggio*. Indeed, I have written nothing for this last two months: a slight circumstance gave a new train to my ideas, and shattered the fragile edifice when half built. What motives have I to write? I *had* motives, and I thank the God of my own heart that they were totally different from those of the other ages of humanity who make mouths in the glass of time. But what are *those* motives now? The only inspiration of an ordinary kind I could descend to acknowledge would be the earning £100 for you; and that it seems I cannot.

Poor Marianne, how ill she seems to have been! Give my best love to her, and tell her I hope she is better, and that I know as soon as she can resolve to set sail, that she

will be better. Your rooms are still ready for you at Lord Byron's. I am afraid they will be rather hot in the summer; they were delightful winter rooms. My post [MS. illegible] must be transformed by your delay into a *paulo post futurum*.

Lord Byron begs me to ask you to send the enclosed letter to London in an enclosure, stating when you mean to sail, and in what ship. It is addressed to the wife of his valet Fletcher, who wishes to come out to join him under your protection, and, I need not tell you to promise her safety and comfort.

All happiness attend you, my best friend, and I believe that I am watching over your interests with the vigilance of painful affection. Mary will write next post. Adieu.

Yours,  
S.

448. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT  
(Florence)

PISA,

SUNDAY MORN[ING. Postmark, March 20, 1822].

MY DEAR CLARE,

I know not what to think of the state of your mind, or what to fear for you. Your late plan about Allegra seems to me in its present form, pregnant with irremediable infamy to all the actors in it except yourself;—in any form wherein *I* must actively co-operate, with inevitable destruction. I *would not* in any case make myself the party to a forged letter. I *could not* refuse Lord Byron's challenge; though that, however to be deprecated, would be the least in the series of mischiefs consequent upon my pestilent intervention in such a plan. I say this because I am shocked at the thoughtless violence of your designs, and I wish to put my sense of this madness in the strongest light. I may console myself, however, with the reflection

that the attempt even is impossible ; as I have no money. So far from being ready to lend me three or four hundred pounds, Horace Smith has lately declined to advance me six or seven napoleons for a musical instrument which I wished to buy for Jane at Paris : nor have I any other Friend to whom I could apply.

You think of going to Vienna. The change might have a favourable effect upon your mind, and the occupation and exertion of a new state of life wean you from counsels so desperate as those to which you have been lately led. I must try to manage the money for your journey. if so you have decided. You know how different my own ideas are of life. I also have been struck by the heaviest inflictions almost, which a high spirit and a feeling heart ever endured.—Some of yours and of my evils are in common, and I am therefore in a certain degree a judge. If you would take my advice, you would give up this idle pursuit after shadows, and temper yourself to the season, seek in the daily and affectionate intercourse of friends a respite from these perpetual and irritating projects. Live from day to day, attend to your health, cultivate literature and liberal ideas to a certain extent, and expect that from time and change which no exertion of your own can give you. Serious and calm reflection has convinced me that you can never obtain Allegra by such means as you have lately devised, or by any means to be devised. Lord Byron is inflexible, and he has her in his power. Remember Clare when you rejected my earnest advice and checked me with that contempt which I have never merited from you, at Milan, and how vain is now your regret !—This is the second of my Sybilline volumes ; if you wait for the third, it may be sold at a still higher price. If you think well, this summer go to Vienna ; but wherever you go or stay, let the *passé* be the past.

I expect soon to write to you on another subject, respecting which, however, all is as you already know. Farewell.

Your affectionate S.

I am much pleased with your translation of "Goethe," which cannot fail to succeed if finished as begun. Lord B[yron] thinks I have sent it to Paris to be translated, and therefore does not yet expect a copy. I shall, of course, have it copied out for him, and preserve your's to be sent to England.

I send you fifty Francesconi—six more than your income—as you have made some expenses for me and Mary, I know not what. Pray acknowledge the receipt of it.

[*Postscript, March 25, 1822.*]

Mary has written, she tells me, an account of yesterday's affray. The man, I am sorry to say, is much worse; but never did anyone provoke his fate so wantonly. I was struck from my horse, and, had not Captain Hay warded off the sabre with his big stick, I must inevitably have been killed. Captain Hay has a severe sabre-wound across his face.

[Addressed outside],

MISS CLAIRMONT,

Fresso al Prof. Bojri,

Piazza Pitti, Firenze.

#### 449. TO EDWARD JOHN TRELAWNY<sup>1</sup>

[March 24 or 25, 1822.]

MY DEAR T.,

Gamba is with me, and we are drawing up a paper demanded of us by the police. Mary tells me that you have an account from Lord Byron of the affair,<sup>2</sup> and we

<sup>1</sup> Trelawny arrived at Pisa on Jan. 14, 1822, and after putting up his horse at his inn and dining, he hastened to the Tre Palazzi in the Lung'Arno, where the Shelleys and the Williams's lived on different flats under the same roof.—Trelawny's "Recollections," p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Williams gives in his diary an account of this "affair with the dragoon." On Sunday, March 24th, he relates that as Byron's party, consisting of himself, Shelley, Captain Hay, Count Gamba (the son), and Taaffe were riding, in the outskirts of Pisa, and the Countess and Mrs. Shelley were behind in the carriage, a mounted dragoon dashed through their party and touched Taaffe's horse as he passed, in an insolent, defying manner. Lord B. put spurs to

wish to see it before ours is concluded. The man is severely wounded in the side, and his life is supposed to be in danger from the weapon having grazed the liver. It were as well if you could come here, as we shall decide on no statement without you.

Ever truly yours,  
SHELLEY.

450. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT

PISA, 1822.

It is of vital importance both to me and to yourself, to Allegra even, that I should put a period to my intimacy with L[ord] B[yrone], and that without *éclat*. No sentiments of honour or justice restrain him (as I strongly suspect) from the basest insinuations, and the only mode in which I could effectually silence him I am reluctant (even if I had proof) to employ during my father's life. But for your immediate feelings I would suddenly and irrevocably leave this country which he inhabits, nor ever enter it but as an enemy to determine our differences *without words*. But at all events I shall soon see you, and then we will weigh both your plans and mine. Write by next post.

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his horse, saying that he should give some account of such insolence. Shelley's horse, however, was the fleetest, and coming up to the dragoon (named Masi) he stopped him until the party arrived, but they had now reached the gate where a guard was stationed. Finding that the party intended to force their way, the dragoon drew his sword and made a cut at Shelley, which took off his cap, and warding the blow from the sharp part of the sabre, the hilt struck his head and knocked him from his horse. The fellow was repeating a cut at S. when Captain Hay parried with a cane he had in his hand, but the sword cut it in two, and struck Captain H's face across the nose. In the scene which followed a servant of Byron's wounded the dragoon in the abdomen. I have used Williams's words in this note, but have been obliged slightly to shorten his account. Mr. Rossetti tells me that Trelawny informed him on one occasion, that the dragoon was (in essentials) clearly in the right, he being on duty, and finding the road blocked by the English party.



451. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT  
(Florence)

PISA,

SUNDAY EVENING, [Postmark], 2 April, 1822.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I wish you could in some degree tranquillize yourself, and fix upon some quiet plan of thought and action. The best would probably be to think and act without a plan, and let the world pass. . . No exertions of yours can obtain Allegra, and believe me that the plans you have lately dreamed, would, were they attempted, only plunge you and all that is connected with you in irremediable ruin.—But I dare say you are by this time convinced of it.

One thing I beg you to answer me. How is your Health? If you have any returns of that affection of the glands of the breasts, you must promise to see Vaccà—I am positive and most anxious on this subject,—for ill-health is one of the evils that is not a dream, and the reality of which every year, if you neglect it, will make more impressive.

This late affair about the Soldier will probably have no consequences. The man is getting better. My part in the affair, if not cautious or prudent, was justifiable: nor can I take to myself any imputation of rashness or want of temper. My words and my actions were calm and peaceable though firm. The fault of the affair, if there be any, began with Taaffe, who loudly and impetuously asked Lord Byron if he would submit to the insult offered by the Dragoon. Lord B. might, indeed, have told Taaffe to redress his own wrongs; but I, who had the swiftest horse, could not have allowed the man to escape, when once the pursuit was begun:—the man was probably drunk. . . Don't be so ready to blame. I imagine that there may be some more temper and prudence in the world, beside what that little person of yours contains.

Your translation of "Goëthe" is excellent.—I did not understand from you that your name was to be told to

Lord B., and I must now adhere to the story already told. I am sure you will gain a great deal by it—if you go on as you have begun. How many papers of the original are done?

Mary will talk gossip, and send you the Indian air, either by this post or the next.—After a long truce, my side has declared war against me; and I suppose I must wait for the general pacification between me and my rebel faculties before it will be quiet for good.

Ever your affectionate

S.

[Addressed outside],

MISS CLAIRMONT,

Presso al Sig. Prof. BOJII,

Piazza Pitti,

Firenze.

#### 452. TO LEIGH HUNT

(Plymouth)

PISA,

April 10, 1822.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I write in the firm hope and persuasion that you have already set sail, and that this letter will undergo the lingering and obscure revolutions of those which are directed by people who return from a voyage round the world by Cape Horn, to those who set off on a voyage round the world by the Cape of Good Hope.

You will, I hope, have received the £220 from Brookes before this; as well as my order upon them, which I *think* I sent to you. It is of no consequence whether I did or not, as Brookes's have orders to pay this sum to you and would have done so even without your application,—though it was quite right to take this precaution.

Lord Byron has the greatest anxiety for your arrival, and is now always urging me to press you to depart. I know that you need no spur. I said what I thought with regard to Lord Byron, nor would I have breathed a syllable

of my feelings in any ear but yours, but with you, I would, and I may think aloud. Perhaps time has corrected me, and I am become, like those whom I formerly condemned, misanthropical and suspicious. If so do you cure me; nor should I wonder, for if friendship is the medicine of such diseases I may well say that mine have been long neglected—and how deep the wounds have been, you partly know and partly can conjecture. Certain it is, that Lord Byron has made me bitterly feel the inferiority which the world has presumed to place between us and which subsists nowhere in reality but in our own talents, which are not our own but Nature's—or in our rank, which is not our own but Fortune's.

I will tell you more of this when we meet. I did wrong in carrying this jealousy of my Lord Byron into his loan to you, or rather to me; and you in the superiority of wise and tranquil nature have well corrected and justly reprov'd me. And plan your account with finding much in me to correct and to reprove. Alas, how am I fallen from the boasted purity in which you knew me once exulting!

How is poor Marianne? My anxiety for *her* is greater than for any of you, and I dread the consequences of the English winter from which she could not escape. Give my most affectionate love to her, and tell her we will soon get her well here. Write before you set off. Your house is still ready for you. We are obliged to go into the country both for mine and Mary's health, to whom the sea air is necessary; but the moment I hear of your arrival, I shall set off, if already in the country, and join you.

Yours affectionately and ever,

P. B. S.

[Addressed outside],  
LEIGH HUNT, Esq.,  
Stonehouse,  
Plymouth,  
Devon,  
Angleterre.

## 453. TO JOHN GISBORNE

PISA,

April 10, 1822.

MY DEAR GISBORNE,

I have received "Hellas," which is prettily printed, and with fewer mistakes than any poem I ever published. Am I to thank you for the revision of the press? or who acted as midwife to this last of my orphans, introducing it to oblivion, and me to my accustomed failure? May the cause it celebrates be more fortunate than either! Tell me how you like "Hellas," and give me your opinion freely. It was written without much care, and in one of those few moments of enthusiasm which now seldom visit me, and which make me pay dear for their visits. I know what to think of "Adonais," but what to think of those who confound it with the many bad poems of the day, I know not.

I have been reading over and over again "Faust," and always with sensations which no other composition excites. It deepens the gloom and augments the rapidity of ideas, and would therefore seem to me an unfit study for any person who is a prey to the reproaches of memory, and the delusions of an imagination not to be restrained. And yet the pleasure of sympathising with emotions known only to few, although they derive their sole charm from despair, and the scorn of the narrow good we can attain in our present state, seems more than to ease the pain which belongs to them. Perhaps all discontent with the *less* (to use a Platonic sophism) supposes the sense of a just claim to the *greater*, and that we admirers of "Faust" are on the right road to Paradise. Such a supposition is not more absurd, and is certainly less demoniacal, than that of Wordsworth, where he says—

" This earth,  
Which is the world of all of us, and where  
*We find our happiness, or not at all.*"

As if, after sixty years' suffering here, we were to be roasted alive for sixty million more in hell, or charitably annihilated by a *coup de grâce* of the bungler who brought us into existence at first !

Have you read Calderon's "Magico Prodigioso ?" I find a striking similarity between "Faust" and this drama, and if I were to acknowledge Coleridge's distinction, should say Goëthe was the *greatest* philosopher, and Calderon the *greatest* poet. "Cyprian" evidently furnished the *germ* of "Faust," as "Faust" may furnish the germ of other poems ; although it is as different from it in structure and plan as the acorn from the oak. I have—imagine my presumption—translated several scenes from both, as the basis of a paper for your journal. I am well content with those from Calderon, which in fact gave me very little trouble ; but those from "Faust"—I feel how imperfect a representation, even with all the licence I assume to figure to myself how Goëthe would have written in English, my words convey. No one but Coleridge is capable of this work.

We have seen here a translation of some scenes, and indeed the most remarkable ones, accompanying those astonishing etchings which have been published in England from a German master. It is not bad—and faithful enough—but how weak ! how incompetent to represent Faust ! I have only attempted the scenes omitted in this translation, and would send you that of the "Walpurgisnacht," if I thought Ollier would place the postage to my account. What etchings those are ! I am never satiated with looking at them ; and, I fear, it is the only sort of translation of which "Faust" is susceptible. I never perfectly understood the Hartz Mountain scene, until I saw the etching ; and then, Margaret in the summer-house with Faust ! The artist makes one envy his happiness that he can sketch such things with calmness, which I only dared look upon once, and which made my brain swim round only to touch the leaf on the opposite side of which I knew that it was figured. Whether it is that the artist has surpassed "Faust,"

or that the pencil surpasses language in some subjects, I know not, or that I am more affected by a visible image, but the etching certainly excited me far more than the poem it illustrated. Do you remember the fifty-fourth letter of the first part of the "*Nouvelle Héloïse*" ? Goëthe, in a subsequent scene, evidently had that letter in his mind, and this etching is an idealism of it. So much for the world of shadows !

What think you of Lord Byron's last volume ?<sup>1</sup> In my opinion it contains finer poetry than has appeared in England since the publication of "*Paradise Regained*." "*Cain*" is apocalyptic—it is a revelation not before communicated to man. I write nothing but by fits. I have done some of "*Charles I* ;" but although the poetry succeeded very well, I cannot seize on the conception of the subject as a whole, and seldom now touch the canvas. You know I don't think much about Reviews, nor of the fame they give, nor that they take away. It is absurd in any Review to criticise "*Adonais*," and still more to pretend that the verses are bad. "*Prometheus*" was never intended for more than five or six persons.

And how are you getting on ? Do your plans still want success ? Do you regret Italy ? or anything that Italy contains ? And in case of an entire failure in your expectations, do you think of returning here ? You see the first blow has been made at funded property :—do you intend to confide and invite a second ? You would already have saved something per cent., if you had invested your property in Tuscan land. The next best thing would be to invest it in English, and reside upon it. I tremble for the consequences, to you personally, from a prolonged confidence in the funds. Justice, policy, the hopes of the nation and renewed institutions, demand your ruin, and I, for one, cannot bring myself to desire what is in itself

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<sup>1</sup> This volume of Byron's, published by Murray in 1821, contained beside "*Cain, a Mystery*," his two tragedies, "*Sardanapalus*," and "*The two Foscari*."

desirable, till you are free. You see how liberal I am of advice ; but you know the motives that suggest it. What is Henry<sup>1</sup> about, and how are his prospects ? Tell him that some adventurers are engaged upon a steamboat at Leghorn, to make the *trajet* we projected. I hope he is charitable enough to pray that they may succeed better than we did.

Remember me most affectionately to Mrs. Gisborne, to whom, as well as to yourself, I consider that this letter is written. How is she, and how are you all in health ? And pray tell me, what are your plans of life, and how Henry succeeds, and whether he is married or not ? How can I send you such small sums as you may want for postage, etc., for I do not mean to tax with my unreasonable letters both your purse and your patience ? We go this summer to Spezzia ; but direct as ever to Pisa,—Mrs. M[ason] will forward our letters. If you see anything which you think would particularly interest me, pray make Ollier pay for sending it out by post. Give my best and affectionate regards to H[ogg ?], to whom I do not write at present, imagining that you will give him a piece of this letter.

Ever most faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

454. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT  
(Florence)

[Postmark, PISA,  
April 11, 1822.]

Mary has not shown me her letter to you, and I therefore snatch an instant to write these few lines.

Come, my best girl, if you think fit, and assure yourself that everyone—I need not speak of myself—will be most happy to see you :—But I think you had better wait a

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<sup>1</sup> Henry Reveley.

post or two, and not make *two* journeys of it, as that would be an expense to no purpose, and we have not an overplus of money. In fact, you had better resolve to be of our party in the country, where we shall go the moment the weather permits; and arrange all your plans for that purpose.—The Williams's and we shall be quite alone, Lord Byron and his party having chosen Leghorn, where their house is already taken.

Do not lose yourself in distant and uncertain plans; but systematise and simplify your motions, at least for the present.

I am not well. My side torments me. My mind agitates the prison which it inhabits, and things go ill with me—that is within—for all external circumstances are auspicious.

Resolve to stay with us this summer, and remain where you are till we are ready to set off:—no one need know of where you are. The Williams's are serene people, and are alone.

Before you come, look at Molini's what German books they have. I have got a "Faust" of my own, and just now my drama on the Greeks is come.<sup>1</sup> I will keep it for you.

Affectionately and ever yours,  
S.

[Addressed outside],  
Miss CLAIRMONT,  
Presso al Prof. BOJTI,  
Piazza Pitti, Firenze.

455. TO OLLIER & CO.  
(London)

PISA,  
April 11, 1822.

GENTLEMEN,

I should be obliged to you to furnish Mr. Gisborne with

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<sup>1</sup> "Hellas," published by the Olliers.



my account with as little delay as is consistent with your convenience. I understand from him that the balance is against me. I have reason to be surprised at this, but I complain of nothing except your silence, which has produced a want of intelligence between us, without which the accounts need never have been in their present state.

Pray let my accounts be sent in to Mr. Gisborne, and I wish you to consider that any arrangements you may feel inclined to enter into with that gentleman respecting my works, etc., are sanctioned by my authority. On the opposite page<sup>1</sup> you will find a list of errata for "Hellas," which in general is more correct than my other books.

Gentlemen, I am your obt. servt.,

P. B. SHELLEY.

Messrs. OLLIER & Co.,  
Vere Street, Bond St.,  
London,  
Angleterre.

456. To HORACE SMITH

PISA,

April 11, 1822.

MY DEAR SMITH,

I have, as yet, received neither the "Nympholept"<sup>2</sup> nor his metaphysical companions—*Time, my Lord, has a wallet on his back*, and I suppose he has bagged them by the way. As he has had a good deal of *alms* for *oblivion* out of me, I think he might as well have favoured me this once; I have, indeed, just dropped another mite into his treasury, called "Hellas," which I know not how to send to you; but I dare say, some fury of the Hades of authors will bring one to Paris. It is a poem written on the Greek cause last summer—a sort of lyrical, dramatic nondescript piece of business.

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<sup>1</sup> Printed in Vol. IV of Mr. H. Buxton Forman's edition of Shelley's Poems.

<sup>2</sup> See note on p. 913.

You will have heard of a *row* we have had here, which, I dare say, will grow to a serious size before it arrives at Paris. It was, in fact, a trifling piece of business enough, arising from an insult of a drunken dragoon, offered to one of our party, and only serious, because one of Lord B.'s servants wounded the fellow dangerously with a pitchfork. He is now, however, recovering, and the echo of the affair will be heard long after the original report has ceased.

Lord Byron has read me one or two letters of Moore to him, in which Moore speaks with great kindness of me ; and of course I cannot but feel flattered by the approbation of a man, my inferiority to whom I am proud to acknowledge.—Amongst other things, however, Moore, after giving Lord B. much good advice about public opinion, etc., seems to deprecate my influence on his mind, on the subject of religion, and to attribute the tone assumed in "Cain" to my suggestions. Moore cautions him against my influence on this particular, with the most friendly zeal ; and it is plain that his motive springs from a desire of benefiting Lord B., without degrading me. I think you know Moore. Pray assure him that I have not the smallest influence over Lord Byron, in this particular, and if I had, I certainly should employ it to eradicate from his great mind the delusions of Christianity, which, in spite of his reason, seem perpetually to recur, and to lay in ambush for the hours of sickness and distress. "Cain" was *conceived* many years ago, and begun before I saw him last year at Ravenna. How happy should I not be to attribute to myself, however indirectly, any participation in that immortal work !—I differ with Moore in thinking Christianity useful to the world ; no man of sense can think it true ; and the alliance of the monstrous superstitions of the popular worship with the pure doctrines of the Theism of such a man as Moore, turns to the profit of the former, and makes the latter the fountain of its own pollution. I agree with him, that the doctrines of the French, and Material Philosophy, are as false as they are

pernicious ; but still they are better than Christianity, inasmuch as anarchy is better than despotism ; for this reason, that the former is for a season, and the latter is eternal. My admiration of the character, no less than of the genius of Moore, makes me rather wish that he should not have an ill opinion of me.

Where are you this summer ?—Forever in Paris ? Forever in France ? We settle this summer near Spezzia ; Lord Byron at Leghorn. May not I hope to see you, even for a trip in Italy ? I hope your wife and little ones are well. Mine grows a fine boy, and is quite well.

I have contrived to get my musical coals at Newcastle itself.—My dear Smith, believe me,

Faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

## XX. LAST DAYS

April 28—July 4, 1822

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SHELLEY'S Arrival at Lerici—Casa Magni—A Last Attempt to Assist Godwin—Death of Allegra—Clare's Grief—Shelley's Boat, the *Don Juan*—Trelawny—A Letter to Mrs. Godwin—Captain and Mrs. Williams—Thoughts on Suicide—Leigh Hunt's Arrival—At Leghorn—Last Letters—The End.

### 457. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY (Spezzia)

LERICI,<sup>1</sup>

SUNDAY, April 28, 1822.

DEAREST MARY,

I am this moment arrived at Lerici, where I am necessarily detained, waiting the furniture, which left Pisa last night at midnight; and as the sea has been calm, and the wind fair, I may expect them every moment. It would not do to leave affairs here in an *impiccio*, great as is my

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<sup>1</sup> "In the month of February," says Mrs. Shelley in the note to Shelley's poems for 1822, "Shelley and his friend [Captain] Williams went to Spezzia to seek for houses for us. Only one was to be found at all suitable; however, a trifle such as not finding a house could not stop Shelley; the one found was to serve for all. It was unfurnished; we sent our furniture by sea, and with a good deal of precipitation, arising from his impatience, made our removal. We left Pisa on 26th of April. The bay of Spezzia is of considerable extent, and divided by a rocky promontory into a larger and smaller one. The town of Lerici is situated on the eastern point, and in the depth of the smaller bay, which bears the name of this town, is the village of Sant' Arenzo. Our house, Casa Magni, was close to this village; the sea came up to the door, a steep hill sheltered it behind. The proprietor of the estate on which it was situated was insane; he had begun to erect a large house at the summit of the hill behind, but his malady prevented its being finished, and it was falling into ruin. He had, and this to the Italians had seemed a glaring symptom of very decided madness, rooted up the olives on the hill side,

anxiety to see you.—How are you, my best love, and how have you sustained the trials of your journey? Answer me this question, and how my little babe and Clare are.

Now to business.—Is the Magni House taken? if not, pray occupy yourself instantly in finishing the affair, even if you are obliged to go to Sarzana, and send a messenger to me to tell me of your success. I, of course, cannot leave Lerici, to which port the boats (for we were obliged to take two), are directed. But *you* can come over in the same boat that brings this letter, and return in the evening. I hear that Trelawny is still with you.

Tell Clare that as in a few days I must probably return

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and planted forest trees; they were mostly young, but the plantation was more in English taste than I ever elsewhere saw in Italy; some fine walnut and *Ilex* trees intermingled their dark massy foliage, and formed groups which still haunt my memory, as they then satiated the eye, with a sense of loveliness. The scene was indeed of unimaginable beauty; the blue extent of the waters, the almost land-locked bay, the near castle of Lerici, shutting it in to the east, and distant Porto Venere to the west; the varied forms of the precipitous rocks that bound in the beach, over which there was only a winding rugged footpath towards Lerici, and none on the other side; the tideless sea leaving no sand nor shingle,—formed a picture such as one sees in Salvator Rosa's landscapes only; sometimes the sunshine vanished when the sirocco raged—the “*ponente*,” the wind was called on that shore. The gales and squalls that hailed our first arrival, surrounded the bay with foam; the howling wind swept our exposed house, and the sea roared unremittingly, so that we almost fancied ourselves on board ship. At other times sunshine and calm invested sea and sky, and the rich tints of Italian heaven bathed the scene in bright and ever-varying tints. The natives were wilder than the place. Our near neighbours of Sant' Arenzo, were more like savages than any people I ever before lived among. Many a night they passed on the beach, singing or rather howling, the women dancing about among the waves that broke at their feet, the men leaning against the rocks and joining in their loud wild chorus. We could get no provisions nearer than Sanzana, at a distance of about three miles and a half off, with the torrent of Magra between, and even there the supply was very deficient. Had we been wrecked on an island of the South Seas, we could scarcely have left ourselves further from civilization and comfort; but where the sun shines the latter becomes an unnecessary luxury, and we had enough society among ourselves. Yet I confess housekeeping became rather a toilsome task, especially as I was suffering in my health, and could not exert myself actively.”

to Pisa, for the affairs of the lawsuit, I have brought her box with me thinking that she might be in want of some of its contents. I ought to say that I do not think that there is accommodation for you all at this inn ; and that, even if there were, you would be better off at Spezzia ; but if the Magni House is taken, then there is no possible reason why you should not take a row over in the boat that will bring this—but don't keep the men long. I am anxious to hear from you on every account and

Ever yours,  
S.

458. TO HORACE SMITH  
(Versailles)

LERICI,  
May, 1822.

MY DEAR SMITH,

It is some time since I have heard from you ; are you still at Versailles ? Do you still cling to France, and prefer the arts and conveniences of that over-civilised country to the beautiful nature and mighty remains of Italy ? As to me, like Anacreon's swallow, I have left my Nile, and have taken up my summer quarters here, in a lonely house, close by the sea-side, surrounded by the soft and sublime scenery of the gulf of Spezzia. I do not write ; I have lived too long near Lord Byron, and the sun has extinguished the glow-worm ; for I cannot hope, with St. John, that "*the light came into the world, and the world knew it not.*"

The object of my present letter is, however, a request, and as it concerns that most odious of all subjects, money, I will put it in the shortest shape—Godwin's law-suit, he tells us, is decided against him ; and he is adjudged to pay £900. He writes, of course, to his daughter in the greatest distress : but we have no money except our income, nor any means of procuring it. My wife has sent him her novel, which is now finished, the copyright of

which will probably bring him £300 or £400—as Oller offered the former sum for it, but as he required a considerable delay for the payment, she rejected his offer. Now, what I wish to know is, whether you could with convenience lend me the £400 which you once dedicated to this service, and allow Godwin to have it, under the precautions and stipulations which I formerly annexed to its employment. You could not obviously allow this money to lie idle waiting for this event, without interest. I forgot this part of the business till this instant, and now I reflect that I ought to have assured you of the regular payment of interest, which I omitted to mention, considering it a matter of course.

I can easily imagine that circumstances may have arisen to make this loan inconvenient or impossible.—In any case, believe me,

My dear Smith,

Yours very gratefully and faithfully,  
P. B. SHELLEY.

#### 459. To LORD BYRON

LERICI,  
May 8, 1822.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,

I have succeeded in dissuading Clare from the melancholy design of visiting the coffin at Leghorn, much to the profit of my own shattered health and spirits, which would have suffered much in accompanying her on such a journey.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Allegra died on April 19; the body was embalmed, sent to England, and buried at Harrow, but Byron's desire that a tablet with the following inscription should be placed in the church was not complied with. The date of the child's death was incorrect

"In Memory of

ALLEGRA,

Daughter of G. G. Lord Byron,  
who died at Bagna Cavallo,  
in Italy, April 20th, 1822,

aged five years and three months.

'I shall go to her, but she shall not return to me.'

2nd Samuel xii. 23."

She is much better : she has, indeed, altogether suffered in a manner less terrible than I expected, after the first shock, during which of course she wrote the letter you enclose. I had no idea that her letter was written in that temper, and I think I need not assure you that, whatever mine or Mary's ideas might have been respecting the system of education you intended to adopt, we sympathise too much in your loss, and appreciate too well your feelings, to have allowed such a letter to be sent to you had we suspected its contents.

The portrait and the hair arrived safe : I gave them to Clare, and made her acquainted with your concession to her requests. She now seems bewildered ; and whether she designs to avail herself further of your permission to regulate the funeral, I know not. In fact, I am so exhausted with the scenes through which I have passed, that I do not dare to ask. I think she will be persuaded not to interfere, as I am convinced that her putting herself forward in any manner would be injurious to herself as it would be painful to me, and probably to you. She has no objection (thus much she has said) to the interment taking place in England.

Byron wrote the following letter to Shelley on receiving the tidings of Allegra's death—

“ April 23, 1822.

“ The blow was stunning and unexpected ; for I thought the danger over, by the long interval between her stated amelioration and the arrival of the express. But I have borne up against it as best I can, and so far successfully, that I can go about the usual business of life with the same appearance of composure, and even greater. There is nothing to prevent your coming to-morrow ; but perhaps, to-day, and yester-evening, it was better not to have met. I do not know that I have anything to reproach in my conduct, and certainly nothing in my feelings and intentions towards the dead. But it is a moment when we are apt to think that, if this or that had been done, such event might have been prevented,—though every day and hour shows us that they are the most natural and inevitable. I suppose that Time will do his usual work—Death has done his.

“ Yours ever,  
“ N. B.”



Tita, I think I told you, is with me. Williams heard this morning from Trelawny, who says that a good deal yet remains to be done with the *Bolivar*. My boat is not yet arrived.

Believe me ever, My dear Lord B.,  
Yours very faithfully,  
P. B. SHELLEY.

## 460. TO CAPTAIN DANIEL ROBERTS

(Genoa)

LERICI,

May 13, 1821 [1822].

DEAR SIR,

The *Don Juan*<sup>1</sup> arrived safe on the evening of Sunday after a long and stormy passage and I have been waiting the clearing up of the weather and the return of the man to write to you. She is a most beautiful boat and so far surpasses both mine and Williams's expectations that it

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley's boat, so called. In her notes on Shelley's poems for 1822 Mrs. Shelley says: "His passion for boating was fostered at this time by having among our friends several sailors; his favourite companion, Edward Ellerker Williams, of the 8th Light Dragoons, had begun his life in the Navy, and had afterwards entered the Army; he had spent several years in India, and his love for adventure and manly exercise accorded with Shelley's taste. It was their favourite plan to build a boat such as they could manage themselves, and, living on the sea-coast, to enjoy at every hour and season the pleasure they loved best. Captain Roberts, R.N., undertook to build the boat at Genoa, where he was also occupied in building the *Bolivar* for Lord Byron. Ours was to be an open boat, on a model taken from one of the royal dockyards. I have since heard that there was a defect in this model, and that it was never seaworthy. . . . At first the fatal boat had not arrived, and was expected with great impatience. On Monday, 12th May, it came. Williams records the long-wished-for fact in his journal: 'Cloudy and threatening weather. Mr. Maglian called; and after dinner, and while walking with him on the terrace, we discovered a strange sail coming round the point of Porto Venere, which proved at length to be Shelley's boat. She had left Genoa on Thursday last, but had been driven back by the prevailing bad winds. A Mr. Heslop and two English seamen brought her round, and they speak most highly of her performances. She does indeed excite my surprise and admiration. Shelley and I walked to Lerici, and made a stretch off the land to

was with some difficulty that we could persuade ourselves that you had not sent us the *Bolivar* by mistake. I do not know how I can express, much less repay, my obligation to you for having sacrificed so much of your time and attention as must have been requisite to produce anything so complete. We were out this morning and for a short time on Sunday evening though the weather was very squally. Yesterday it blew a gale from the South West and she required more reefs than we found in her sails. To-day we went from Lerici to Spezzia and back again on a wind in a little more than an hour and a half. I hope, however, soon to see you here, and although I cannot boast very capital accommodation, that you will put up with such quarters as we can afford which after all will be better than the Inn.

Tell Trelawny I write to him by the post; he will arrange with you in what manner I am to remit the rest of the expenses of the boat; I think he told me he wished me to procure him Tuscan crowns to that amount.

Believe me, Dear Sir,

Your very obliged and faithful

P. B. SHELLEY.

I have kept one of the Boys you sent for the boat.

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try her; and I find she fetches whatever she looks at. In short, we have now a perfect plaything for the summer.' . . . The time of the friends was now spent on the sea; the weather became fine, and our whole party often passed the evenings on the water when the wind promised pleasant sailing. Shelley and Williams made longer excursions; they sailed several times to Massa; they had engaged one of the seamen, who brought her round, a boy, by name Charles Vivian; and they had not the slightest apprehension of danger. When the weather was unfavourable, they employed themselves with alterations in the rigging, and by building a boat of canvas and reeds, as light as possible, to have on board the other for the convenience of landing in waters too shallow for the larger vessel. When Shelley was on board, he had his papers with him; and much of the "Triumph of Life" was written as he sailed or weltered on the sea which was soon to engulf him."

Trelawny might well laugh at me for the idea of employing my doll Domenico<sup>1</sup> in such a craft.

[Addressed outside],  
Capt. ROBERTS, R.N.,  
Genoa.

461. TO EDWARD JOHN TRELAWNY

LERICI,

May 16, 1822.

MY DEAR TRELAWNY,

The *Don Juan* is arrived, and nothing can exceed the admiration she has excited; for we must suppose the name to have been given her during the equivocation of sex which her godfather suffered in the harem. Williams declares her to be perfect, and I participate in his enthusiasm, in as much as would be decent in a landsman. We have been out now several days, although we have sought in vain for an opportunity of trying her against the feluccas or other large craft in the bay; she passes the small ones as a comet might pass the duller planet of the heavens. When do you expect to be here in the *Bolívar*? If Roberts's £50 grow into £500, and his ten days into months, I suppose I may expect that I am considerably in your debt, and that you will not be round here until the middle of the summer. I hope that I shall be mistaken in the last of these conclusions; as to the former, whatever may be the result, I have little reason and less inclination to

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<sup>1</sup> Shelley's servant, who is mentioned in the opening stanza of "The Boat on the Serchio"—

"Our boat is asleep on Serchio's stream,  
Its sails are folded like thoughts in a dream,  
The helm sways idly, hither and thither;  
Domenic, the boatman, has brought the mast  
And the oars and the sails; but 'tis sleeping fast  
Like a beast, unconscious of its tether."

Professor Dowden says ("Life of Shelley," Vol. II, p. 407), "A Domenico Beni, who I find was sent early in 1822 to attend Miss Clairmont to Pisa, may be the Domenic of the poem."

complain of my bargain. I wish you could express from me to Roberts, how excessively I am obliged to him for the time and trouble he has expended for my advantage, and which I wish could be as easily repaid as the money which I owe him, and which I wait your orders for remitting.

I have only heard from Lord Byron once, and solely upon that subject. Tita<sup>1</sup> is with me, and I suppose will go with you in the schooner to Leghorn.

We are very impatient to see you, and although we cannot hope that you will stay long on your *first* visit, we count upon you for the latter part of the summer, as soon as the novelty of Leghorn is blunted. Mary desires her best regards to you, and unites with me in a sincere wish to renew an intimacy from which we have already experienced so much pleasure.

Believe me, my dear Trelawny,  
Your very sincere friend,  
P. B. SHELLEY.

462. TO LORD BYRON  
(Pisa)

LERICI,

May 16, 1822.

MY DEAR LORD B.,

I received this morning a letter from Lega, with one enclosed of Collini's, relating, if I rightly understand them, to the prosecution of Masi. I wish it to be understood that I *personally* have not the least desire to proceed against the poor devil; but if you think it might conduce to Antonio's enlargement, or be in any other respect advantageous to you, I am willing to act as you think best. Pray write to me precisely what you wish me to do on this

<sup>1</sup> See p. 896.

the letter, for it is only the last one which I suppressed, or not, as he thought proper.

I have written to Mr. Smith<sup>1</sup> to solicit the loan of £400, which, if I can obtain it in that manner, is very much at Mr. Godwin's service. The views which I now entertain of my affairs forbid me to enter into any further reversionary transactions, nor do I think, Mr. Godwin would be a gainer by the contrary determination, as it would be next to impossible to effect any such bargain at this distance. Nor could I burthen my income, which is barely sufficient to meet its various claims, and the system of life in which it seems necessary that I should live.

We hear you have Jane's<sup>2</sup> news from Mrs. Mason. Since the late melancholy event (the death of Allegra) she has become far more tranquil nor should I have anything to desire with regard to her, did not the uncertainty of my own life and prospects render it prudent for her to attempt to establish some sort of independence as a security against an event which would deprive her of that which she at present enjoys. She is well in health, and usually resides in Florence, where she has formed a little society for herself among the Italians, with whom she is a great favourite. She was here for a week or two, and though she has now returned to Florence, we expect her soon to visit us for the summer months. In the winter, unless some of her various plans succeed, for she may be called *la fille aux mille projets*, she will return to Florence.

Mr. Godwin may depend on receiving immediate notice of the result of my application to Mr. Smith. I hope to hear soon an account of your situation and prospects, and remain, dear Madam,

Yours very sincerely,

P. B. SHELLEY.

<sup>1</sup> Horace Smith.

<sup>2</sup> Miss Clairmont.

464. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT  
(Florence)

[SARZANO GUIGNO], LERICI,  
TUESDAY EVENING, May 29, 1822.

MY DEAR CLARE,

Tell me when we are to expect you, and the precise hour and day at which you arrive at Viareggio.—I do not expect that you will have found any motives at Florence for altering your intentions with respect to this summer, and I think that, at least for the present, you would be happier here than anywhere else. I have heard from Mrs. Mason. Mary still continues to suffer terribly from languor and hysterical affections; and things in every respect remain as they were when you left us. . . . . The letters on the sail, after having undergone a thousand processes remain still distinct, and the only difference is that the sail is in a dismal condition.—We cannot match the stuff.—I sailed to Massa the other day, and returned late at night against a high sea and heavy wind in which the boat behaved excellently. I sit within the whole morning and in the evening we sail about.—I write a little—I read and enjoy for the first time these ten years something like health—I find, however, that I must neither think nor feel, or the pain returns to its old nest.

Williams seems happy and content, and we enjoy each other's society. Jane is by no means acquiescent in the system of things, and she pines after her own house and saucepans to which no one can have a claim except herself. It is a pity that any one so pretty should be so selfish.—But don't tell her this—and come soon yourself, I hope my best Clare, with tranquillized spirits and a settled mind to your ever constant and affectionate

Friend, P. B. S.

Mrs. M[ason] will tell you all Sk[inner] St[reet] news. Mary is not in a state to hear it.

## 465. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT

LERICI,

THURSDAY [Postmark : Sarzana, 31 May, 1822].

MY DEAR CLARE,

I am vexed to hear you are so ill, although the state of your spirits does not surprise me. I do not think there is any chance of your experiencing annoyance of whatever kind at Lerici, as I suspect between me and the only object from which it could spring [*i.e.* Byron] there is a great gulph fixed, which by the nature of things must daily become wider.—I hear nothing of Hunt, nor have we any letter from England except those you are acquainted with, and one from Mr. Gisborne.—I think you would be happier here ; and indeed always either with or near me, —but on this subject your own feelings and judgment must guide you. My health is much better this summer than it has been for many years ; but the occupation of a few mornings in composition has somewhat shaken my nerves.—I have turned Maria's room into a study, and am in this respect very comfortable.—What do you think about the situation of the G[odwin]s, and their pretensions upon our resources ? This question you cannot answer in a letter, but I should be very glad to hear your opinion on it ; meanwhile I do nothing. Mary has been very unwell ; she is now better, and I suppose it will be necessary to make the Godwins a subject of conversation with her—at present I put off the evil day. The superscription of my poor boat's infamy is erased. We have had the piece taken out, and new reef-bands put in, and in such a manner that it will be impossible to distinguish that it has been mended, it merely appears as if two additional reefs had been inserted, of which, indeed, we were greatly in want.—Jane the other day was very much discontented with her situation here, on account of some of our servants having taken something of hers. but now,

as is the custom, calm has succeeded to storm, to yield to the latter in accustomed vicissitude.—Mary, though ill, is good. And how are you ?

I wish you could mark down some good cook for us—a man, of course.—If you could find another Betta without the disagreeable qualities of the last, it would do.

Your ever affectionate,  
S.

Say when we are to come to meet you.

[Addressed outside],  
Miss CLAIRMONT,  
presso al Sigr. Prof. Bojti,  
Piazza Pitti.  
Firenza.

#### 466. TO JOHN GISBORNE

LRICI,  
June 18, 1822.

In my doubt as to which of your most interesting letters I shall answer, I quash the business one for the present, as the only part of it that requires an answer requires also maturer consideration. In the first place I send you money for postage, as I intend to indulge myself in plenty of paper and no crossings. Mary will write soon ; at present she suffers greatly from excess of weakness, produced by a severe miscarriage, from which she is now slowly recovering. Her situation for some hours was alarming, and as she was totally destitute of medical assistance, I took the most decisive resolutions, by dint of making her sit in ice, I succeeded in checking the hemorrhage and the fainting fits, so that when the physician arrived all danger was over, and he had nothing to do but to applaud me for my boldness. She is now doing well, and the sea-baths will soon restore her. I have written to Ollier to send his account to you. The "Adonais" I wished to have had a fair chance, both because it is a favourite with me and on account of the memory of Keats, who was a poet of



great genius, let the classic party say what it will. "Hellas" too I liked on account of the subject—one always finds some reason or other for liking one's own composition. The "Epipsychidion" I cannot look at, the person whom it celebrates was a cloud instead of a Juno; and poor Ixion starts from the centaur that was the offspring of his own embrace. If you are curious, however, to hear what I am and have been, it will tell you something thereof. It is an idealized history of my life and feelings. I think one is always in love with something or other; the error, and I confess it is not easy for spirits cased in flesh and blood to avoid it, consists in seeking in a mortal image the likeness of what is perhaps eternal.

Hunt is not yet arrived, but I expect him every day. I shall see little of Lord Byron, nor shall I permit Hunt to form the intermediate link between him and me. I detest all society—almost all, at least—and Lord Byron is the nucleus of all that is hateful and tiresome in it. He will be half mad to hear of these memoirs.<sup>1</sup> As to me, you know my supreme indifference to such affairs, except that I must confess that I am sometimes amused by the ridiculous mistakes of these writers. Tell me a little of what they say of me besides my being an atheist. One thing I regret in it, I dread lest it should injure Hunt's prospects in the establishment of the journal, for Lord Byron is so mentally capricious that the least impulse drives him from his anchorage. . . . The Williams's are now on a visit to us, and they are people who are very pleasing to me. But words are not the instruments of our intercourse. I like Jane more and more, and I find Williams the most amiable of companions. She has a taste for music, and an elegance of form and motions that compensate in some degree for the lack of literary refinement. You know my gross ideas of music, and will forgive me when I say that

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<sup>1</sup> "Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Lord Byron, with some of his contemporaries," 1822. This book, which contains some objectionable references to Shelley, was written by John Watkins.

I listen the whole evening on our terrace to the simple melodies with excessive delight. I have a boat here. It cost me £80, and reduced me to some difficulty in point of money. However, it is swift and beautiful, and appears quite a vessel. Williams is captain, and, we drive along this delightful bay in the evening wind under the summer moon until earth appears another world. Jane brings her guitar, and if the past and future could be obliterated, the present would content me so well that I could say with Faust to the passing moment "Remain thou, thou art so beautiful." Clare is with us, and the death of her child seems to have restored her to tranquillity. Her character is somewhat altered. She is vivacious and talkative; and though she teases me sometimes, I like her. . . . Lord Byron, who is at Leghorn, has fitted up a splendid vessel, a small schooner on the American model, and Trelawny is to be captain. How long the fiery spirit of our pirate will accommodate itself to the caprice of the poet remains to be seen. . .

I write little now. It is impossible to compose except under the strong excitement of an assurance of finding sympathy in what you write. Imagine Demosthenes reciting a Philippic to the waves of the Atlantic. Lord Byron is in this respect fortunate. He touched a chord to which a million hearts responded, and the coarse music which he produced to please them, disciplined him to the perfection to which he now approaches. I do not go on with "Charles the First." I feel too little certainty of the future, and too little satisfaction with regard to the past to undertake any subject seriously and deeply. I stand, as it were, upon a precipice, which I have ascended with great, and cannot descend without greater peril, and I am content if the heaven above me is calm for the passing moment.

You don't tell me what you think of "Cain." You send me the opinion of the populace, which you know I do not esteem. I have read several more of the plays of

Calderon. "Los Dos Amantes del Cielo," is the finest, if I except one scene in the "Devocion de la Cruz." I read Greek and think about writing.

I do not think much of — not admiring Metastasio; the *nil admirari*, however justly applied, seems to me a bad sign in a young person. I had rather a pupil of mine had conceived a frantic passion for Marini himself, than that she had found out the critical defects of the most deficient author. When she becomes of her own accord full of genuine admiration for the finest scene in the "Purgatorio," or the opening of the "Paradiso," or some other neglected piece of excellence, hope great things. Adieu, I must not exceed the limits of my paper however little scrupulous I seem about those of your patience.

P. B. S.

I waited three days to get this pen mended, and at last was obliged to write.

#### 467. TO LORD BYRON

LERICI,

SUNDAY [? June, 1822].

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,

I have just heard from Hunt, and, what is still more decisive, from a friend of his, announcing his third embarkation on the 13th of May. We may therefore expect him every day at Leghorn, and although he omits to mention the name of the ship, you are on the spot, and will easily be able, by the intervention of Dunn or some other omniscient of that sort, to intercept him before he proceeds to Pisa, and give him my direction, and contrive that the poor fellow's first impression on his arrival in Italy should be such as they could not fail to be from an unexpected meeting with you. I shall sail over to pay both him and you a visit as soon as I hear of his arrival. But perhaps he has written to you more explicitly.

I hear that the Americans are tempting you to migrate,

in hopes, perhaps, that when Time, who blots out scutcheons and patents of nobility, shall have made the title-page of "Cain" and "Childe Harold" still brighter, the Homeric doubt shall be renewed about your birthplace throughout all the regions in which English will be spoken. It will be curious enough to hear the academies of New Holland and Labrador disputing on such a subject.

What news of our process? I hear that Antonio is treated with more mildness, and likely to be released. They say, too, that Masi is to be degraded and severely punished. This would be a pity, and I think you would do well, so soon as our own points are gained, to intercede for the poor devil, whom it would not be right to confound with his government, or rather with the popular prejudice of the Pisans, to the suggestions of which the government conformed itself.

Clare desires me to send you the enclosed packet, and to request that her letters may be returned to her.

I hear nothing of your Schooner: Williams is on the look out for her all day, and has hoisted his flags at least ten times in honour of the approach of her phantom.

The filthy people have covered my letter with oil, but it is too late to do anything else than beg you to excuse it.

Ever faithfully yours,

P. B. S.

468. TO EDWARD JOHN TRELAWNY

LERICI,

June 18, 1822.

MY DEAR TRELAWNY,

I have written to Guebhard<sup>1</sup> to pay you 154 Tuscan crowns the amount of the balance against me according to Roberts's

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<sup>1</sup> Guebhard & Co. were Shelley's bankers at Leghorn. I find the following note addressed to Brookes & Co., Bankers, Chancery Lane, London: "LERICI, June 15, 1822. Gentlemen, Be so good as to send a credit for my quarter's income, due the 25th of this month, to Messrs. Guebhard & Co., merchants, Leghorn, for my use. I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, your humble servant, PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY."

calculation, which I keep for your satisfaction, deducting sixty, which I paid the auvergiste at Pisa, in all 214. We saw you about eight miles in the offing this morning ; but the abatement of the breeze leaves us little hope that you can have made Leghorn this evening. Pray write us a full, true, and particular account of your proceedings, etc. How Lord Byron likes the vessel ; what are your arrangements and intentions for the summer ; and when we may expect to see you or him in this region again ; and especially whether there is any news of Hunt.

Roberts and Williams are very busy in refitting the *Don Juan* ; they seem determined that she shall enter Leghorn in style. I am no great judge of these matters ; but am excessively obliged to the former, and delighted that the latter should find amusement, like the sparrow, in educating the cuckoo's young.

You, of course, enter into society at Leghorn : should you meet with any scientific person, capable of preparing the *Prussic Acid*, or *essential oil of bitter almonds*, I should regard it as a great kindness if you could procure me a small quantity. It requires the greatest caution in preparation, and ought to be highly concentrated ; I would give any price for this medicine ; you remember we talked of it the other night, and we both expressed a wish to possess it ; my wish was serious, and sprung from the desire of avoiding needless suffering. I need not tell you I have no intention of suicide at present, but I confess it would be a comfort to me to hold in my possession that golden key to the chamber of perpetual rest. *The Prussic Acid* is used in medicine in infinitely minute doses ; but that preparation is weak, and has not the concentration necessary to medicine all ills infallibly. A single drop, even less, is a dose, and it acts by paralysis.

I am curious to hear of this publication about Lord Byron and the Pisa circle.<sup>1</sup> I hope it will not annoy him,

as to me I am supremely indifferent. If you have not shown the letter I sent you, don't, until Hunt's arrival, when we shall certainly meet.

Your very sincere friend,

P. B. SHELLEY.

Mary is better though still excessively weak.

409. TO LEIGH HUNT

(Genoa)

LERICI,

June 19, 1822.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

I write to you on the chance that you may not have left Genoa before my letter can reach you. Your letter was sent to Pisa, and thence forwarded here, or I should probably have ventured to meet you at Genoa; but the chances are now so much diminished of finding you, that I will not run the risk of the delay of seeing you that would be caused by our missing each other on the way. I shall therefore set off for Leghorn the moment that I hear you have sailed.—We now inhabit a white house, with arches, near the town of Lerici, in the gulf of Spezzia. The Williamses are with us. Williams is one of the best fellows in the world; and Jane his wife a most delightful person, whom we all agree is the exact antitype of the lady<sup>1</sup> I described in "The Sensitive Plant," though this must have been a pure *anticipated cognition*, as it was written a year before I knew her. I wish you need not pass Lerici, which I fear you will do; cast your eye on the white house, and think of us.

A thousand welcomes, my best friend, to this divine country; high mountains and seas no longer divide those whose affections are united. We have much to think of and talk of when we meet at Leghorn; but the final

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<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Mason (Lady Mountcashell) was the lady originally portrayed in this poem.

result of our plans will be peace to you, and to me a greater degree of consolation than has been permitted since we met. My best love to Marianne, whose illness will soon disappear with the causes of it. If any circumstance *should* make you stop at Lerici, imagine the delightful surprise.—Poor Mary who sends you a thousand loves has been seriously ill. She is still too unwell to rise from the sofa, and must take great care of herself for some time, or she would come with us to Leghorn. Lord Byron is in *villeggiatura*, near Leghorn; and you will meet besides with a Mr. Trelawny, a wild but kind-hearted seaman.

Give me the earliest intelligence of your motions.  
[P. B. SHELLEY].

470. TO HORACE SMITH

LERICI,

June 29, 1822.

MY DEAR SMITH,

I believe I have as much cause to be obliged to you by your refusal, as I should have been by your grant of the request contained in my last letter. I wrote in compliance with my engagement to do so and with some regret, as I have been long firmly persuaded that all the money advanced to Godwin so long as he stands engaged in business is absolutely thrown away. Your advice to him is excellent, and although I do not think that he will follow it of his own choice, there is every probability that circumstances will compel him to submit to some such measures as you recommend: and I have absolutely no funds to prevent that necessity nor the most remote intention of anticipating further upon a patrimony already too much diminished.

Pray thank Moore for his obliging message. I wish I could as easily convey my sense of his genius and character. I should have written to him on the subject of my late letter, but that I doubted how far I was justified in doing

so ; although, indeed, Lord Byron made no secret of his communication to me. It seems to me that things have now arrived at such a crisis as requires every man plainly to utter his sentiments on the inefficacy of the existing religion, no less than political systems, for restraining and guiding mankind. Let us see the truth, whatever that may be. The destiny of man can scarcely be so degraded, that he was born only to die ; and if such should be the case, delusions, especially the gross and preposterous ones of the existing religion, can scarcely be supposed to exalt it. If every man said what he thought, it could not subsist a day. But all, more or less, subdue themselves to the element that surrounds them, and contribute to the evils they lament by the hypocrisy that springs from them.

England appears to be in a desperate condition, Ireland still worse ; and no class of those who subsist on the public labour will be persuaded that *their* claims on it must be diminished. But the government must content itself with less in taxes, the landholder must submit to receive less rent, and the fundholder a diminished interest, or they will all get nothing. I once thought to study these affairs, and write or act in them. I am glad that my good genius said, *refrain*—I see little public virtue, and I foresee that the contest will be one of blood and gold, two elements which however much to my taste in my pockets and my veins, I have an objection to out of them.

Lord Byron continues at Leghorn, and has just received from Genoa a most beautiful little yacht, which he caused to be built there. He has written two new cantos of "Don Juan," but I have not seen them. I have just received a letter from Hunt, who has arrived at Genoa. As soon as I hear that he has sailed, I shall weigh anchor in my little schooner, and give him chase to Leghorn, when I must occupy myself in some arrangements for him with Lord Byron. Between ourselves, I greatly fear that this alliance will not succeed ; for I, who could never have been regarded as more than the link of the two thunderbolts,



cannot now consent to be even that; and how long the alliance may continue, I will not prophesy. Pray do not hint my doubts on the subject to any one, or they might do harm to Hunt; and they *may* be groundless.

I still inhabit this divine bay, reading Spanish dramas, and sailing, and listening to the most enchanting music. We have some friends on a visit to us, and my only regret is that the summer must ever pass, or that Mary has not the same predilection for this place that I have, which would induce me never to shift my quarters.

Farewell.—Believe me ever your obliged and affectionate friend,  
P. B. SHELLEY.

471. TO JANE WILLIAMS  
(Casa Magni)

PISA,

July 4, 1822.

You will probably see Williams before I can disentangle myself from the affairs with which I am now surrounded. I return to Leghorn to-night, and shall urge him to sail with the first fair wind, without expecting me. I have thus the pleasure of contributing to your happiness when deprived of every other, and of leaving you no other subject of regret, but the absence of one scarcely worth regretting. I fear you are solitary and melancholy at Villa Magni, and, in the intervals of the greater and more serious distress in which I am compelled to sympathise here, I figure to myself the countenance which had been the source of such consolation to me, shadowed by a veil of sorrow.

How soon those hours passed, and how slowly they return to pass so soon again, perhaps for ever, in which we have lived together so intimately, so happily! Adieu, my dearest friend! I only write these lines for the pleasure of tracing what will meet your eyes. Mary will tell you all the news.

S.

472. TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT SHELLEY  
(Casa Magni)

PISA,

July 4, 1822.

MY DEAREST MARY,

I have received both your letters, and shall attend to the instructions they convey. I did not think of buying the *Bolivar*; Lord B. wishes to sell her, but I imagine would prefer ready money. I have as yet made no inquiries about houses near Pugnano—I have no moment of time to spare from Hunt's affairs; I am detained unwillingly here, and you will probably see Williams in the boat before me,—but that will be decided to-morrow.

Things are in the worst possible situation with respect to poor Hunt. I find Marianne in a desperate state of health, and on our arrival at Pisa sent for Vaccà. He decides that her case is hopeless, and that although it will be lingering, must inevitably end fatally. This decision he thought proper to communicate to Hunt, indicating at the same time, with great judgment and precision, the treatment necessary to be observed for availing himself of the chance of his being deceived. This intelligence has extinguished the last spark of poor Hunt's spirits, low enough before. The children are all well and much improved.

Lord Byron is at this moment on the point of leaving Tuscany. The Gambas have been exiled, and he declares his intention of following their fortunes. His first idea was to sail to America, which has been changed for Switzerland, then to Genoa, and last to Lucca.—Everybody is in despair and everything in confusion. Trelawny was on the point of sailing to Genoa for the purpose of transporting the *Bolivar* overland to the lake of Geneva, and had already whispered in my ear his desire that I should not influence Lord Byron against this terrestrial navigation. He next received *orders* to weigh anchor and set sail for

Lerici. He is now without instructions, moody and disappointed. But it is the worst for poor Hunt, unless the present storm should blow over. He places his whole dependence upon this scheme of a journal, for which every arrangement has been made and arrived with no other remnant of his £400 than a debt of 60 crowns. Lord Byron must of course furnish the requisite funds at present, as I cannot ; but he seems inclined to depart without the necessary explanations and arrangements due to such a situation as Hunt's. These, in spite of delicacy, I must procure ; he offers him the copyright of the "Vision of Judgment" for the first number. This offer, if sincere, is *more* than enough to set up the journal, and, if sincere, will set everything right.

How are you, my best Mary ? Write especially how is your health and how your spirits are, and whether you are not more reconciled to staying at Lerici, at least during the summer.

You have no idea how I am hurried and occupied ; I have not a moment's leisure, but will write by next post. Ever, dearest Mary, Yours affectionately,

S.

I have found the translation of the "Symposium."

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The following is Mrs. Shelley's account of Shelley's last voyage : "The heats set in, in the middle of June ; the days became excessively hot, but the sea breeze cooled the air at noon, and extreme heat always put Shelley in spirits : a long drought had preceded the heat, and prayers for rain were being put up in the churches, and processions of relics for the same effect took place in every town. At this time we received letters announcing the arrival of Leigh Hunt at Pisa. Shelley was very eager to see him. I was confined to my room by severe illness, and could not move ; it was agreed that Shelley and Williams should go to Leghorn in the boat. Strange that no fear of danger crossed our minds ! Living on the sea-shore, the ocean became as a plaything : as a child may sport with a lighted stick, till a spark inflames a forest and spreads destruction over all, so did we fearlessly and blindly tamper with danger, and make a game of the terrors of the ocean. Our Italian neighbours even trusted themselves as far as Massa in the skiff ; and the running down the line of coast to Leghorn, gave no more notion of peril than

a fair-weather island navigation would have done to those who had never seen the sea. Once, some months before, Trelawny had raised a warning voice as to the difference of our calm bay, and the open sea beyond ; but Shelley and his friend, with their one sailor boy, thought themselves a match for the storms of the Mediterranean, in a boat which they looked upon as equal to all it was put to do.

On the 1st of July they left us. If ever shadow of future ill darkened the present hour, such was over my mind when they went.<sup>(1)</sup> During the whole of our stay at Leici, an intense presentiment of coming evil brooded over my mind, and covered this beautiful place, and genial summer, with the shadow of coming misery—I had vainly struggled with these emotions—they seemed accounted for by my illness, but at this hour of separation they recurred with renewed violence. I did not anticipate danger for them, but a vague expectation of evil shook me to agony, and I could scarcely bring myself to let them go. The day was calm and clear, and a fine breeze rising at twelve they weighed for Leghorn ; they made the run of about fifty miles in seven hours and a half : the *Bolivar* was in port, and the regulations of the health-office not permitting them to go on shore after sunset, they borrowed cushions from the larger vessel, and slept on board their boat.

"They spent a week at Pisa and Leghorn. The want of rain was severely felt in the country. The weather continued sultry and fine. I have heard that Shelley all this time was in brilliant spirits. Not long before, talking of presentiment, he had said the only one that he ever found infallible, was the certain advent of some evil fortune when he felt peculiarly joyous. Yet if ever fate whispered of coming disaster, such inaudible, but not unfelt, prognostics hovered around us. The beauty of the place seemed unearthly in its excess ; the distance we were at from all signs of civilisation, the sea at our feet, its murmurs or its roaring for ever in our ears,—all these things led

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(1) Captain Roberts watched the vessel with his glass from the top of the lighthouse of Leghorn, on its homeward track. They were off Via Reggio, at some distance from shore, when a storm was driven over the sea. It enveloped them and several larger vessels in darkness. When the cloud passed onward, Roberts looked again, and saw every other vessel sailing on the ocean except their little schooner, which had vanished. From that time he could scarcely doubt the fatal truth ; yet we fancied that they might have been driven towards Elba, or Corsica, and so be saved. The observation made as to the spot where the boat disappeared, caused it to be found, through the exertions of Trelawny for that effect. It had gone down in ten fathom water ; it had not capsized, and, except such things as had floated from her, everything was found on board exactly as it had been placed when they sailed. The boat itself was uninjured. Roberts possessed himself of her, and decked her, but she proved not sea-worthy, and her shattered planks now lie rotting on the shore of one of the Ionian islands, on which she was wrecked.

the mind to brood over strange thoughts, and, lifting it from everyday life, caused it to be familiar with the unreal. A sort of spell surrounded us, and each day, as the voyagers did not return, we grew restless and disquieted, and yet, strange to say, we were not fearful of the most apparent danger.

The spell snapped, it was all over; an interval of agonising doubt—of days passed in miserable journeys to gain tidings, of hopes that took firmer root, even as they were more baseless—were changed to the certainty of the death that eclipsed all happiness for the survivors for evermore.

There was something in our fate peculiarly harrowing. The remains of those we lost were cast on shore; but by the quarantine laws of the coast, we were not permitted to have possession of them—the laws, with respect to everything cast on land by the sea, being, that such should be burned, to prevent the possibility of any remnant bringing the plague into Italy; and no representation could alter the law. At length, through the kind and unwearied exertions of Mr. Dawkins, our *Chargé d'Affaires* at Florence, we gained permission to receive the ashes after the bodies were consumed. Nothing could equal the zeal of Trelawny in carrying our wishes into effect. He was indefatigable in his exertions, and full of forethought and sagacity in his arrangements. It was a fearful task: he stood before us at last, his hands scorched and blistered by the flames of the funeral pyre, and by touching the burnt relics as he placed them in the receptacles prepared for the purpose. And there, in compass of that small case, was gathered all that remained on earth of him whose genius and virtue were a crown of glory to the world—whose love had been the source of happiness, peace, and good,—to be buried with him!

The concluding stanzas of the *Adonais* pointed out where the remains ought to be deposited; in addition to which our beloved child lay buried in the cemetery at Rome. Thither Shelley's ashes were conveyed, and they rest beneath one of the antique weed-grown towers that recur at intervals in the circuit of the massy ancient wall of Rome. . . . He selected the hallowed place himself; there is the

"Sepulchre,

O, not of him, but of our joy!—

And grey walls moulder round, on which dull Time  
Feeds like slow fire upon a hoary brand;

And one keen pyramid, with wedge sublime,

Pavilioning the dust of him who planned

This refuge for his memory, doth stand

Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath

A field is spread, on which a newer band

Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,

Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath."

Trelawny, who is our chief authority for the particulars of Shelley's last days, tells us in his "Recollections" that when two bodies were found on the shore, one of them, cast up near *Via Reggia* on July 18, was identified as that of Shelley by the "tall, slight figure, the

volume of Sophocles in one pocket, and Keats's poems [*'Lamia,'* etc.] in the other, doubled back as if the reader, in the act of reading, had hastily thrust it away." The other body, found on July 17, three miles from Shelley's, and in a much more mutilated condition, was recognised from the clothes to be that of Shelley's comrade, Williams. Three weeks later, a third body, a mere skeleton, was found, which, although unrecognisable, was supposed to be that of the sailor-boy, Charles Vivian. The bodies were buried in the sand, but it was decided that the remains of Shelley should be removed to Rome and interred in the Protestant Cemetery beside his child, and that Williams's should be conveyed to England. "To do this," says Trelawny, "in their then far-advanced state of decomposition, and to obviate the difficulties offered by the quarantine laws, the ancient custom of burning and reducing the bodies to ashes was suggested." Permission was therefore obtained for the removal of the bodies, from the Lucchese and Florentine governments by Mr. Dawkins, the English chargé d'affaires at Florence; Trelawny had an iron furnace made at Leghorn, and on August 15, at noon, in the presence of Byron, Leigh Hunt, and Captain Shenley, and attended by some soldiers and the Health Officer, Williams's body was disinterred from the sand and placed in the furnace. "The funereal pyre was now ready," he adds. "I applied the fire, and the material being dry and resinous, the pine-wood burnt furiously, and drove us back. It was hot enough before, there was no breath of air, and the loose sand scorched our feet. As soon as the flames became clear, and allowed us to approach, we threw frankincense and salt into the furnace, and poured a flask of wine and oil over the body. The Greek oration was omitted, for we had lost our Hellenic bard." When the body was reduced to ashes, these were collected and placed in a small oak box, bearing a brass inscription in Latin.

On the following day, August 15, Trelawny, Byron, Leigh Hunt, and the soldiers and Health Officer as before, repeated the ceremony for Shelley's body at Viareggio, some distance along the coast towards Massa. "Three white wands had been stuck in the sand to mark the poet's grave," says Trelawny. "The lonely and grand scenery that surrounded us so exactly harmonized with Shelley's genius, that I could imagine his spirit soaring above us. The sea, with the islands of Gorgona, Capraja, and Elba, was before us; old battlemented watch-towers stretched along the coast, backed by the marble-crested Apennines glistening in the sun, picturesque from their diversified outlines, and not a human dwelling was in sight." Nearly an hour was spent in digging before they came upon his body. "Even Byron was silent and thoughtful. We were startled and drawn together by a dull hollow sound that followed the blow of a mattock; the iron had struck a skull, and the body was soon uncovered. . . . Byron asked me to preserve the skull, but remembering that he had formerly used one as a drinking cup, I was determined Shelley's should not be so profaned." The body was removed into the furnace. "After the fire was well kindled . . . more wine was poured on Shelley's

dead body than he had consumed during his life. This with the oil and salt made the yellow flames glisten and quiver. The heat from the sun and fire was so intense that the atmosphere was tremulous and wavy." Notwithstanding the great heat, Shelley's heart was not consumed, and Trelawny in snatching it from the fiery furnace burnt his hand severely. He gave this relic afterwards to Leigh Hunt, who later, but not without earnest entreaty, resigned it to Mary Shelley. "After her death," says Prof. Dowden, "in a copy of the Pisa edition of 'Adonais,' at the page which tells how death is swallowed up in immortality, were found under a silkcn covering the embrowned ashes, now shrunk and withered, which she had secretly treasured." The furnace having been cooled in the sea, Trelawny collected the ashes and placed them in a box, which he took on board Byron's boat, the *Bolivar*, and conveyed them to Leghorn. Not being able to go immediately to Rome, he consigned Shelley's ashes to the care of Mr. Freeborn, the English Consul at Rome, who, in order to quiet the authorities, enclosed the casket in a coffin, and interred it with the usual ceremonies in January, 1823, in the new cemetery, the old burial-ground adjoining it where William Shelley and Keats were buried, being closed. Among those present at the interment were General Cockburn, Sir C. Sykes, Joseph Severn, Seymour Kirkup, Westmacott, Scoles, Freeborn, and the Revs. W. Cook and Burgess. When Trelawny visited Rome in the spring of 1823, he found Shelley's grave among a cluster of others. "The old Roman wall," writes Trelawny, "partly enclosed the place, and there is a niche in the wall formed by two buttresses—immediately under a pyramid, said to be the tomb of Caius Cestius. There were no graves near it at that time. This suited my taste, so I purchased the recess, and sufficient space for planting a row of the Italian upright cypresses." Here he had two graves built in the recess, and in one of which he deposited, in April, 1823, the ashes of Shelley. The grave was covered with a stone bearing the well-known Latin inscription by Leigh Hunt, the verses from "The Tempest" being added by Trelawny—

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY,

COR CORDIUM,

Natus iv. Aug. MDCCXCII.

Obiit viii. Jul. MDCCCXXII.

"Nothing of him that doth fade,  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange."

## Appendix I

### HARRIET SHELLEY'S CORRESPONDENCE AFTER HER SEPARATION FROM SHELLEY

To MRS. NEWTON  
(Dublin)

23 CHAPEL STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE [LONDON],

August 8 [1814].

MADAM,

It is so long since I have heard from my amiable friend, Mrs. Nugent, that I begin to fear she has quitted this world of sorrow and pain. If she has, no human being will regret her loss more than myself. I must beg you to write by return of post and tell me all the particulars. If I am wrong in my conjeetures, tell her to write, if only one line, to her most attached and faithful friend,

H. SHELLEY.

To CATHERINE NUGENT  
(Dublin)

23 CHAPEL STREET [LONDON],

August 25 [1814].

MY DEAR MRS. NUGENT,

I am afraid you will think I am not sincere, when I tell you what pleasure the sight of your handwriting caused me. I think as you do with the greatest horror on the present state of things—giving the slave trade to France for seven years. Can anything be more horrible? Peace has been dearly purchased at this price. I am dreadfully afraid America will never hold out against the numbers sent to invade her. How senseless all these rejoicings are! Deluded beings, they little know the many injuries that are to ensue. I expect France will soon have another revolution. The present king is not at all fitted to govern such a nation. Mr. Shelley is in France. You will be surprised to find I am not with him; but times are altered, my dear friend, and tho' I will not tell you what has passed, still do not think that you cloud my mind with your sorrows. Every age has its cares. God knows, I have mine. Dear Ianthe is quite well. She is fourteen months old, and has six teeth. What I should have done without this dear babe and my sister I know not. This world is a scene of heavy trials to us all. I little expected ever to go thro' what I have. But time heals the deepest wounds, and for the sake of that sweet infant, I hope to live many years. Write to me often. My dear friend, you know what pleasure your letters give me. I wish you lived in England that I might be near you. Tell me how you are in health. Do not despond, tho' I see nothing to hope for when all that was virtuous becomes vicious and depraved. So it is—nothing is certain in this world.



I suppose there is another where those that have suffered keenly here will be happy. Tell me what you think of this. My sister is with me. I wish you knew her as well as I do. She is worthy of your love. Adieu, dear friend, may you still be happy is the first wish of your ever faithful friend,

H. SHELLEY.

Ianthe is well and very engaging.

TO CATHERINE NUGENT  
(Dublin)

23 CHAPEL STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE [LONDON],

November 20 [1814].

MY DEAR MRS. NUGENT,

Your fears are verified. Mr. Shelley has become profligate and sensual, owing entirely to Godwin's "Political Justice." The very great evil that book has done is not to be told. The false doctrines there contained have poisoned many a young and virtuous mind. Mr. Shelley is living with Godwin's two daughters—one by Mary Wollstonecraft, the other the daughter of his present wife, called Clairmont. I told you some time back Mr. S. was to give Godwin three thousand pounds. It was in effecting the accomplishment of this scheme that he was obliged to be at Godwin's house, and Mary was determined to seduce him. She is to blame. She heated his imagination by talking of her mother, and going to her grave with him every day, till at last she told him she was dying in love for him, accompanied with the most violent gestures and vehement expostulations. He thought of me and my sufferings, and begged her to get the better of a passion as degrading to him as herself. She then told him she would die—he had rejected her, and what appeared to her as the sublimest virtue was to him a crime. Why could we not all live together? I as his sister, she as his wife? He had the folly to believe this possible, and sent for me, then residing at Bath. You may suppose how I felt at the disclosure. I was laid up for a fortnight after. I could do nothing for myself. He begged me to live. The doctors gave me over. They said 'twas impossible. I saw his despair, the agony of my beloved sister; and owing to the great strength of my constitution I lived; and here I am, my dear friend, waiting to bring another infant into this woful world. Next month I shall be confined. He will not be near me. No, he cares not for me now. He never asks after me or sends me word how he is going on. In short, the man I once loved is dead. This is a vampire. His character is blasted for ever. Nothing can save him now. Oh! if you knew what I have suffered, your heart would drop blood for my miseries. When may I expect to see you? Do tell me, my dear friend, and write soon. Eliza is at Southampton with my darling babe. London does not agree with her. Will you enquire for a family of the name of Colthurst in Dublin? There is one son and daughter growing up living with the mother. I want

the direction, as I know them very well. Adieu, my dear friend, may you be happy is the best wish of her who sincerely loves you.

H. SHELLEY.

TO CATHERINE NUGENT  
(Dublin)

23 CHAPEL STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE [LONDON],  
Decr. 11 [1814].

MY DEAREST MRS. NUGENT,

I have been confined a fortnight on Wednesday. Ianthe has a brother.<sup>1</sup> He is an eight months' child, and very like his unfortunate father, who is more depraved than ever. Oh, my dear friend, what a dreadful trial it is to bring children into the world so utterly helpless as he is, with no kind father's care to heal the wounded frame. After so much suffering my labour was a very good one, from nine in the morning till nine at night. He is a very fine healthy child for the time. I have seen his father; he came to see me as soon as he knew of the event; but as to his tenderness to me, none remains. He said he was glad it was a boy, because he would make money cheaper. You see how that noble soul is debased. Money now, not philosophy, is the grand spring of his actions. Indeed, the pure and enlightened philosophy he once delighted in has flown. He is no longer that pure and good being he once was, nor can he ever retrieve himself. You will see us all in the Spring; I mean to come to Ireland, to get my boxes which are detained there. You shall then return with me to England, my dear friend, which you have often promised, and I will promise Mrs. Newman not to keep you any longer than you like to stay. God bless you, my dearest friend, till we meet. Let me hear from you soon. Eliza sends her love to you, and Ianthe too. May you be happy is the first wish of her who loves you sincerely.

H. SHELLEY.

Write very soon and tell me if you have received my last letter.

TO CATHERINE NUGENT  
(Dublin)

[23] CHAPEL STREET [LONDON],  
January 24 [1815].

MY DEAR MRS. NUGENT,

I am sorry to tell you my poor little boy has been very ill. He is better now, and the first spare time I devote to you. Why will you not come to England, my dear friend, and stay with me? I should be so happy to have you with me. I am truly miserable, my dear friend. I really see no termination to my sorrows. As to Mr. Shelley I know nothing of him. He neither sends nor comes to see me. I am still at my father's, which is very wretched. When

<sup>1</sup> Shelley's eldest son, Charles Bysshe Shelley, who died in 1826.

I shall quit this house I know not. Everything goes against me. I am weary of my life. I am so restrained here that life is scarcely worth having. How I wish you were here. What will you do, my dear Catherine? Now these Newmans retire you will not like to go to another house of business. The few years you have to live may surely be passed more pleasantly. Do now make up your mind at once to come and stay with me. I will do everything to make you happy. For myself happiness is fled. I live for others. At nineteen I could descend a willing victim to the tomb. How I wish those dear children had never been born. They stay my fleeting spirit, when it would be in another state. How many there are who shudder at death. I have been so near it that I feel no terrors. Mr. Shelley has much to answer for. He has been the cause of great misery to me and mine. I shall never live with him again. 'Tis impossible. I have been so deceived, so cruelly treated, that I can never forget it. Oh no, with all the affections warm, a heart devoted to him, and then to be so cruelly blighted. Oh! Catherine, you do not know what it is to be left as I am, a prey to anguish, corroding sorrow, with a mind too sensitive to others' pain. But I will think no more. There is madness in thought. Could I look into futurity for a short time how gladly would I pierce the veil of mystery that wraps my fate. Is it wrong, do you think, to put an end to one's sorrow? I often think of it—all is so gloomy and desolate. Shall I find repose in another world? Oh, grave, why do you not tell us what is beyond thee? Let me hear from you soon, my dear friend. Your letters make me more happy. Tell me about Ireland. You know I love the green Isle and all its natives. Eliza joins in kind love to you. I remain your sincere but unhappy friend,

H. SHELLEY.

TO JOHN FRANK NEWTON  
(near Fordingbridge).  
23 CHAPEL STREET, GROSVENOR SQUARE,  
June 5 [1816].

MY DEAR MR. NEWTON,

It is with the deepest emotions of sorrow that I heard of Mrs. Newton's illness, which however I trust she may recover. I met Mr. Lawrence very lately, and he told me he thought she might in time conquer the disease. That she may still live to enjoy many years of happiness with you and your sweet children is my very fervent wish. If there is anything which I can do for you pray let me know. To the unhappy there is nothing so delightful, as being of use to others. If my presence would add in the least degree to yours or your children's comfort I am very ready to leave Town and fly to give comfort to the distressed—which I am sure you would do for those you highly esteem. I sincerely hope your usual illness will pass off slightly; if there is any kind of Fruit I can send you do tell me; at present there is but little variety owing to our cold spring. If it will fatigue you too much to write an answer let my favorite Augustus give me a line just to say how you all are, or Mary. Pray don't take any trouble yourself; my sister unites with me in kindest regards and best wishes to you all, and I remain,

Your sincere friend, H. SHELLEY.

## Appendix II

### ADDITIONAL SHELLEY LETTERS

The following letters have reached my hands too late for insertion in their proper places.

288A. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON HOGG

[? MARLOW,  
*Winter, 1817-8.*]

MY DEAR HOGG,

Mary desires me to say that she has received your letter, and that she unites with me in saying that she shall be happy to see you as soon as you can get free from the numberless briefs which no doubt are pouring into your vestibule.

The weather is delightful. So unseasonably fine that yellow and blue flowers are blooming in the hedges, and the primroses are flowering in the garden as if it were spring: a few days may cover them with snow.

Peacock has finished his poem,<sup>(1)</sup> which is a story of classical mystery and magic—the transfused essence of Lucian, Petronius, and Apuleius. I have not yet heard it all, but in a few days he will send it to the press.

I am at this moment not very classically employed, nor have I summoned courage to accept Scapula as my mentor and guide through the bowers of Greek delight.

Might I not, by a confidence in Scapula, lose the end while busied about the means; and exchange the embraces of a living and tangible Calypso for the image of a Penelope, who, though wise, can never again be young.

331A. TO CLARA MARY JANE CLAIRMONT  
(Leghorn)

[? FLORENCE,  
September 25, 1819.]

MY DEAREST GIRL,

I slept at Empoli last night according to your desire, and slept as one might naturally sleep after taking a double dose of opium. I am here in doubt about my hours, and fear that I shall not be able to see you again so soon as Thursday. To-day I am tolerably

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(1) "Rhododaphne," published in 1818.

fatigued : and have a pain in my other side : but all this bustle and weariness does not hurt my health as it *ought to do*, if the prophecy of your last letter were to turn out true.

Yours ever most affectionately,

S.

[*Second page of folded sheet.*]

Take care of yourself and pray do as I desired you—especially abstaining from all sorts of fruit ; and if you take any wine let it be Aleatico. Adieu.

[*Pencil note.*]

If I were you I would consult Palloni about the pain in your stomach. Vaccà does not always attend when he thinks the illness slight.

Give my compts. to the Siga. Tolonei, and pay her at the interval you think fit eleven crowns, and say that I have given a receipt for it. Say that I am going to see her house, etc., etc.

S.

[Addressed to]—

MISS CLAIRMONT,  
1188 Via St. Francesco,  
Livorno.

361A. TO THOMAS JEFFERSON HOGG.

PISA,

April 20, 1820.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is some time since I heard from or of you. [?Peacock] is metamorphosed by his Indian preferment into a very laconic correspondent ; he seems persuaded of the truth of the Christian maxim, "let your communications be yea, yea, nay, nay, for whatever is more than this cometh of evil." Hunt writes to me sometimes, and tells me that, when in town, you spend the Sundays with him frequently ; more he says not. *Wherefore* I resolved to write to you, so that even if you are one of the atoms of the fame-getting, money-getting whirlwind, you might know that I at least wished to hear of you.

I think it is since I last wrote that Mary has given me a little boy, whom I call Percy. He is now five months old, a lovely child, and very healthy ; but you may conceive after the dreadful events of last year how great our anxiety is about him.

We spent the severity of the winter at Florence, and are now at Pisa, where we are on the point of taking a very pleasant house just outside the walls. I have been fortunate enough to make acquaintance here with a most interesting woman, in whose society we spend a great part of our time. She is married, and has two

children ; her husband is, what husbands too commonly are, far inferior to her, but not in the proportion of Mrs. Gisborne's. You will have some idea of the sort of person, when I tell you that I am now reading with her the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus.

I hope you have received a copy of the "Cenci" from Ollier. I told him to send you one, but as he is very negligent, I think it possible that he may not have adverted to it. In that case, whenever you pass his shop ask him for it from me. You will see that it is studiously written in a style very different from any other compositions ; how far it may be better or worse will be decided according to the various judgments of those who read it. I have dedicated it to Hunt. Hunt, perhaps, is the only man among my friends whom a dedication from so unpopular a person as myself would not injure.

This winter, even in Italy, has been extremely severe, and I have suffered in proportion ; but I revive with the return of spring. I spent the winter at Florence, and dedicated every sunny day to the study of the gallery there ; the famous Venus, the Minerva, the Apollino—and more than all, the Niobe and her children, are there. No production of sculpture, not even the Apollo, ever produced on me so strong an effect as this Niobe. Doubtless you have seen casts of it. We are now at Pisa, where (with the exception of a few weeks, in the midst of summer, which we propose to spend at the Bagni di Lucca) we shall remain some indefinite time.

You know that some time since we talked of visiting Italy together. At that time, as at many others, an unfortunate combination of circumstances which have now ceased to exist prevented me from enjoying your society. There is no person for whom I feel so high an esteem and value as for you, or from whom I expected to receive so great a portion of the happiness of my life ; and there is none of whose society I have been so frequently deprived by the unfortunate and almost inexplicable complexity of my situation. At this very moment perhaps when it is practicable, on my part, to put into execution the plan to which I allude, perhaps it is impossible on yours.

But let me dwell for a moment on the other side of the question. What say you to making us a visit in Italy ? How would it consist with your professional engagements ?

You could *see* but little of Italy in June and July on account of the heat, and we *must* then be at the Bagni di Lucca, which though a spot of enchanting beauty, contains none of those objects of art for which Italy is principally worth visiting. But if you are inclined seriously to think of this proposal, I would impose no other law on you than to come as soon, and return as late, as you can. Term begins, I know, in the middle of November, but how far does your business require you to be present on the first day of term ? The mode of coming would be to cross France to Marseilles, from whence to Livorno there is a passage sometimes of 36 hours, but the average 3 days. Or you might engage in London for the whole journey over the Alps, but this is a very tedious and much more expensive

I ought to add that Mary unites with me in wishing that we may have the pleasure of seeing you. Of course, none of my other friends will join you, but I need not say that Peacock will be welcome.

Do you ever see the Boinvilles now? Or Newton? If so, tell them, especially Mrs. Boinville, that I have not forgotten them. I wonder none of them stray to this Elysian climate, and, like the sailors of Ulysses, eat the lotus and remain as I have done.

*[The signature has been cut away.]*

66A. TO EDWARD FERGUS GRAHAM<sup>1</sup>

[CWM ELAN, RADNORSHIRE,  
SOUTH WALES.]

July 15, 1811.

MY DEAR GRAHAM,

I hope that you will quickly set to Music that heavenly ode, which certainly deserves to be ranked with the most exquisite productions of Pindar. This is a most delightful place, but more adapted for the Rosa-Matildan than the Petrio-Pindaric style of rhapsodizing. Here are rocks, cataracts, woods and Groves. I shall perhaps send you some songs: by the bye, will those I have sent do? Let me hear from you.

I remain yours very aff.,

P. B. SHELLEY.

TO SIGNORA DIONIGHI  
(Rome)

FIRENZE,

Xcembre, 1819.

STIMATISSIMA SIGNORA,

Appena lusingarmi [lusingomi?] che Lei si rammenta di me; ma la bontà che ha ricevuta tutta la mia famiglia dalle sue mani, mentre che stava in Roma, mi fa sperar che non siamo intieramente dimenticati da lei. La prego di accettare i saluti della mia Signora Moglie, e della Signorina Clara. Speriamo che la sua salute sta sempre meglio quanto quella delle sue amabili figli. Con questo prendo la libertà di presentarla la Signora Jones, et la Signorina Sofia Stacey, amiche mie, e signore Inglesi—ammiratore di tutte

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<sup>1</sup> This letter, which was written by Shelley while on a visit to his cousin, Thomas Grove, is derived from the Ferdinand J. Dreer collection of manuscripts, in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. The librarian of that institution, Mr John W. Jordan, has courteously furnished me with a copy of the letter. The same Society also possess the original of Shelley's letter to T. C. Medwin of November 26, 1811, printed as No. 100, p. 179, in the present collection. Medwin made a few slight alterations in his printed copy and omitted a part of the postscript.

le belle arti, e che sapr'uno valere i suoi gran przi [pregi?] Queste Signore viaggione per l'Italia, et m'assicuro che il suo coltissimo genio le sarà del più gran vantaggio nel istruirsi sopra le antichità di Roma. Per me mi trovo in questo momento à Firenze, ma ancora fra poco visiterò Roma. Quando allora mi farò il piacere di salutarla. Potendo servirla qui che mi comanda. Sarà servita dal mio meglio. In questa speranza, le bacio le mani.—La prezo de credermi con tutta sincerità suo servo umilissimo.—P. B. S.

All' Illustrissima Signora, La Signora Dionigi,

310 Corso, Roma.

TO SIGNORA DIONIGI  
(Rome)

[Mrs. Angel's translation of the preceding letter.]

FLORENCE,

December, 1819.

DEAR MADAM,

I hardly dare flatter myself that you remember me, but the kindness shown by you to all my family while we were in Rome makes me hope that we are not entirely forgotten by you. I beg you to accept my wife's kind greetings and those of Miss Clara. We trust your health continues better, as also that of your amiable children [daughters?]. I hereby take the liberty to present to your Miss Jones and Miss Sophia Stacey, two English ladies, my friends—admirers of all the fine arts, and who will be able to value your great talents. These ladies are travelling in Italy, and I feel certain that your great culture will be of the utmost value to them in studying the antiquities of Rome. As for me, I am at this moment in Florence, but I intend shortly to visit Rome again, when I shall have the pleasure of paying my respects to you. If I can be of any service to you here, command me. I will serve you to the best of my ability. In this hope I kiss your hands. I beg you to believe me very sincerely your humble servant.

P. B. S.

A PROPOSED LETTER TO OLLIER, THE EDITOR OF THE LITERARY  
MISCELLANY.<sup>1</sup>

N.B.—*Passages cancelled by Shelley are here marked | | ; brackets being reserved for doubtful readings or editorial additions.*

[1st draft]

[? PISA, March, 1821].

MR. EDITOR,

The ingenious author of a paper which lately appeared in your Miscellany, entitled the four ages of Poetry, has directed the light of a mind replete with taste and learning to the illustration of a

<sup>1</sup> These draft letters should be read in connection with Shelley's correspondence on his essay "A Defence of Poetry," pp. 846-850, 859.



paradox so dark as of itself to absorb whatever rays of truth might fall upon it.

I will endeavour to place the two positions which compose his opinion.

There are four ages of Poetry, corresponding to the four ages of the world | in which this art or faculty has progressively deteriorated |. Poetry [at first] was no more than the rude efforts of expression . . . before language<sup>1</sup> had assumed any degree of philosophical perfection; and instead of softening the manners and refining the feelings of the semi-barbarians whose intervals of repose it soothed, it flattered their vices and hardened them to fresh acts of carnage and destruction. The character and personal conduct of the poets themselves (and this is the most [lamentable?] for poetry) was then deserving of contempt.

Thirdly, with the progress of civil society and the development of the arts of life poetry has deteriorated in exact proportion of the universal amelioration; and the examples [afforded by it] in ages of high [refinement and civilization] and especially in the age in which we live, are below derision and the instruments of the utmost passiveness and depravity of moral sentiment.

Fourthly, every person conscious of intellectual power ought studiously to wcan himself from the study and the practise of poetry, and ought to apply that power to general finance, political economy, to the study in short [of] the laws according to which the forms of the social order might be most wisely regulated for the happiness of those whom it binds together.

[These are indeed high objects, and I pledge myself to worship Themis rather than Apollo . . . ]

Before we subject these propositions to [analysis] it were well to discover what poetry is.

[Addition]

So dark a paradox may absorb the brightest rays of mind which fall upon it; it is an impious daring [attempt] to extinguish Imagination, which is the Sun of Life, Impious attempt! parricidal and self-murdering [attempt] and would leave to its opponent a secure but an inglorious Conquest.

He would extinguish Imagination which is the Sun of life, and grope his way by the cold and uncertain and borrowed light of that moon which he calls Reason, stumbling over the interlunar chasm of time where she deserts us, and an owl, rather than an eagle, stare with dazzled eyes on the watery orb which is the Queen of his pale Heaven.—But let us in true sense place within the scan of reason an opinion so light that there is less danger that it should preponderate than that the winged words of which it is composed<sup>2</sup> should fly out

<sup>1</sup> Continued three pages further on, an addition and a second draft intervening.

<sup>2</sup> *Alternative reading*: with which this writer attempts to prove that Poetry is a bad thing. [I hope soon to see a treatise against the light of the sun adorn your columns.]

of the balance like those with which Spenser's giant thought to counterpoise the golden weight of justice.

2nd draft.

MR. EDITOR,

The following remarks were suggested by an essay entitled the "Four Ages of Poetry" which appeared some months since in your valuable Miscellany. [The wit, the spirit, the learning of this essay delighted me: but the paradox it attempts to support . . .] I suspect it to be written by a friend of mine who is a desperate rider of a hobby. . .

The wit, the learning and the spirit of this essay are the spurs of a hobby of a construction. . . but these qualities [in the present instance] deserve to [be] buried, where four roads meet, with a stake through their body, for they are caught in the very fact of suicide. The writer is in this respect like a pig swimming, he cuts his own throat.

TO LORD BYRON  
(Ravenna)

PISA, Oct. 21, 1821.

MY DEAR LORD BYRON,

I should have written to you long since but that I have been led to expect you almost daily in Pisa, and that I imagined you would cross my letter on your road. Many thanks for "Don Juan." It is a poem totally of its own species, and my wonder and delight at the grace of the composition no less than the free and grand vigour of the conception of it perpetually increase. The few passages which any one might desire to be cancelled in the first and second Cantos are here reduced almost to nothing. This poem carries with it at once the stamp of originality and a defiance of imitation. Nothing has ever been written like it in English, nor, if I may venture to prophesy, will there be, without carrying upon it the mark of a secondary and borrowed light. You unveil and present in its true deformity what is worst in human nature, and this is what the wailings of the age murmur at, conscious of their want of power to endure the scrutiny of such a light. We are damned to the knowledge of good and evil, and it is well for us to know what we should avoid no less than what we should seek.

The character of Lambro, his return, the merriment of his daughter's guests, made, as it were, in celebration of his funeral, the meeting with the lovers, and the death of Haidée, are circumstances combined and developed in a manner that I seek elsewhere in vain. The fifth Canto, which some of your pet Zoili in Albemarle Street said was *dull*, gathers instead of loses, splendour and energy; the language in which the whole is clothed—a sort of chameleon under the changing sky of the spirit that kindles it—is such as these lispering days could not have expected, and are, believe me, in spite of the approbation which you wrest from them, little pleased to hear.

One can hardly judge from recitation, and it was not until I read it in print that I have been able to do it justice. This sort of writing only on a great plan, and perhaps in a more compact form, is what I wished you to do when I made my vows for an epic.

But I am content. You are building up a drama, such as England has not yet seen, and the task is sufficiently noble and worthy of you.

When may we expect you? The Countess G. is very patient, though sometimes she seems apprehensive that you will *never* leave Ravenna.

I have suffered from my habitual disorder and from a tertian fever since I have returned, and my ill health has prevented me from showing her the attentions I could have desired in Pisa.

I have heard from Hunt, who tells me that he is coming out in November, by sea I believe.

Your house is ready and all the furniture arranged. Lega, they say, is to have set off yesterday.

The Countess tells me that you think of leaving Allegra for the present at the convent. Do as you think best; but I can pledge myself to find a situation for her here such as you would approve in case you change your mind.

I hear no political news but such as announces the slow victory of the spirit of the past over that of the present. The other day, a number of Heteristi, escaped from the defeat in Wallachia, past through Pisa, to embark at Leghorn and join Ipsilanti in Livadia. It is highly to the credit of the actual government of Tuscany, that it allowed these poor fugitives three livres a day each, and free quarters during their passage through these states.

Mrs. S. desires her best regards.

My dear Lord Byron,

Yours most faithfully,

P. B. SHELLEY.

TO JANE WILLIAMS

1822.

DEAR JANE,

If this melancholy old song<sup>1</sup> suits any of your tunes, or any that humour of the moment may dictate, you are welcome to it. Do not say it is mine to any one, even if you think so; indeed, it is from the torn leaf of a book out of date. How are you to-day, and how is Williams? Tell him that I dreamed of nothing but sailing, and fishing up coral.

Yours ever affectionate,

P. B. S.

<sup>1</sup> Shelley's lines: *Remembrance*—"Swifter far than Summer's flight."

TO EDWARD WILLIAMS

1822.

MY DEAR WILLIAMS,

Looking over the portfolio in which my friend<sup>1</sup> used to keep his verses, and in which those I sent you the other day were found, I have lit upon these; which, as they are too dismal for *me* to keep, I send you. If any of the stanzas should please you, you may read them to Jane, but to no one else. And yet, on second thoughts, I had rather you would not.

Yours ever affectionately,  
P. B. S.

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<sup>1</sup> That is, of course, Shelley himself. The verses are those beginning "The Serpent is shut out of Paradise," which was first entitled by Mr. W. M. Rossetti—"To Edward Williams."

## Appendix III

### HOGG AND SHELLEY'S LETTERS

As stated elsewhere (pp. 153, 184) the text of Shelley's letters, as printed by Hogg in his "Life of Shelley," has for many years been regarded as untrustworthy. Probably one of the reasons that prompted the Shelley family to withdraw from Hogg's hands the material entrusted to him for the preparation of his "Life" of the poet (see p. xxvi), was the knowledge that he had taken unwarrantable liberties with Shelley's correspondence. Mr. W. M. Rossetti was the first to state (1870) that letters "given in Hogg's 'Life' are garbled and misdated. Even apart from special information one can discern that they are jumbled together without any care or guidance to the reader." He further expressed a conviction that the fragment published by Hogg as "part of a variation of Goethe's 'Werther'" was "a portion of the severe remonstrance which the poet addressed to Hogg" in connection with the reasons that compelled the Shelleys to leave York in Dec., 1811 (see p. 184). Professor Dowden, in writing his life of Shelley, accepted Mr. Rossetti's conclusions, and was able to give the correct text of some letters in the possession of the Shelley family which had appeared in a garbled form in Hogg's "Life," and he very kindly furnished me with corrected copies of letters to Godwin and Hookham which will be found in the present book. In correcting Shelley's letters, Hogg's intentions appear to have been dictated often with a desire to tone down his friend's scepticism, sometimes to make his meaning clearer, but it is evident that he also in many cases changed the sense of the poet's text to suit his own ends. The following letters were first printed by M. A. Koszul in his recently published work, "La Jeunesse de Shelley," and are here reprinted with his permission and that of Lord Abinger. M. Koszul states that the corrections were made on the margin of Hogg's text by Lady Shelley, doubtless towards the end of her life, from the original autograph letters of the poet which had been lent to her. In connection with the subject of Hogg's corrections, M. Koszul quotes appropriately from an unpublished letter of Hogg to Lady Shelley (April 20, 1857), in which he wrote, with a characteristic touch of irony, just before the publication of his "Life," "To falsify documents would be to injure the faith of history and to destroy the credit of our book."

FIELD PLACE, Dec. 20, 1810.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The moment which announces your residence, I write. There is now need of all my art; I must resort to deception. There is need for. . .

My father called on S. in London, who has converted him to sanctity. He mentioned my name, as a supporter of sceptical principles. My father wrote to me, and I am now surrounded, environed by dangers, to which compared the devils, who besieged St. Anthony, were all inefficient. They attack me for my detestable principles; I am reckoned an outcast; yet I defy them, and laugh at their ineffectual efforts. . . to Christianity. . . deistical principles. . . all were. . . Yet defy them . . .

S. will no longer do for me; I am at a loss whom to select. S.'s skull is very thick, but I am afraid that he will not believe my assertion; indeed should it gain credit with him, should he accept the offer of publication, there exist numbers who will find out, or imagine, a real tendency; and booksellers possess more power than we are aware of impeding the sale of any book, containing opinions displeasing to them. I am disposed to offer it to Wilkie and Robinson, Paternoster Row, and to take it there myself; they published Godwin's works, and it is scarcely possible to suppose that any one, layman or clergyman, will assert that these support gospel doctrines. If that will not do, I must print it myself. Oxford, of course, would be most convenient for the correction of the press. . . whom to recommend. . . your assertion; . . find out its real tendency; . . any book whose opinions are displeasing to them. I would recommend to offer it. . . yourself; he publishes Godwin's works, it is. . . any one but [a] clergyman. . . the doctrines of the Gospel. If that will not do, I would recommend you to print it yourself.

Mr. L.'s principles are not *very* severe; he is more a votary to Mammon than God. Mr. Munday's principles. . .

O! I burn with impatience for the moment of the dissolution of intolerance; it has injured me. I swear on the altar of perjured Love to revenge myself on the hated cause of the effect, which *even now* I can scarcely help deploring. Indeed I think it is to the benefit of society to destroy the opinion which can annihilate the dearest of its ties. Inconveniences would now result from my *owning* the novel, which I have in preparation for the press. I give out, therefore, that I will publish no more; every . . the moment of Christianity's dissolution.

one here, but the select few who enter into its schemes, believe my assertion. I will stab the wretch in secret. Let us hope that the wound which I inflict, though the dagger be concealed, will rankle in the heart of the adversary.

the wound which  
we inflict...  
.. our adversary.

[The following page reads]

"I am composing a *satirical* poem; I shall print it at Munday's, unless I find that Robinson is ripe for printing whatever will sell,"—in place of "I shall print it at Oxford, unless I find, on visiting him, that R. is ripe. .")

FIELD PLACE, Jany. 2, 1811.

[No change appears to have been made in the first part of this letter.]

I have wandered in the snow, for I am cold, wet, and mad. Pardon me, pardon my delirious egotism; this really shall be the last. My sister is well; I fear she is not quite happy on my account, but is much more cheerful than she was some days ago. I hope you will publish a tale; I shall then give a copy to Elizabeth, unless *you* forbid it. I would do it not only to show her what your ideas are on the subject of works of imagination, and to interest her, but that she should see her brother's friend in a new point of view. When you examine her character, you will find humanity, not divinity, amiable as the former may sometimes be: however, I, a brother, must not write treason against my sister; so I will check my volubility. Do not direct your next letter to Field Place, only to Horsham. To-morrow I will write more connectedly.

Yours sincerely,

.. she is not quite happy, but is much more cheerful. .

.. publish *Leonora*

.. not only to tell her what your ideas are on the subject of religion, and to interest her, but that she should see you in a new point of view.

FIELD PLACE, January 17, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I shall be with you as soon as possible next week. You really were at Hungerford, whether you knew it or not. You tell me nothing about the tale which you promised me. I hope it gets on in the press, I am anxious for its appearance. S — certainly behaved in a vile manner to me; no other bookseller would have violated the confidence reposed in him. I will talk to him in London, where I shall be on Tuesday. Can I do anything for you there?

.. nothing about *Leonora*. I hope she gets on... her appearance.  
.. Stockdale.  
.. to you.

You notice the peculiarity of the expression "My Sister" in my letters. It certainly arose independent of consideration, and I am happy to hear that it is so.

Your systematic cudgel for blockheads is excellent. I tried it on with my father, who told me that thirty years ago he had read Locke, but this made no impression.

The "*equus et res*" are all that I can boast of; the "*pater*" is swallowed up in the first article of the catalogue. You tell me nothing of the tale; I am all anxiety about it. I am forced hastily to bid you adieu.

. You notice the peculiarity "My Sister." It certainly arose independent of consideration. I am happy to hear.

. cudgel for Christianity.

. the "*equus et res*" is...  
. of *Leonora*; I am anxious about her.

15, POLAND STREET, April 26, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I indulge despair. *Why* do I so? I will not philosophize; it is perhaps, a poor way of administering comfort to myself to say that I *ought* not to be in need of it. I fear the despair which springs from disappointed love is a passion—a passion, too, which is least of all reducible to reason. But it is a passion, it is independent of volition; it is the necessary effect of a cause, which *must*, I feel, continue to operate. Wherefore, then, do you ask, *Why* I indulge despair? And what shall I tell you, which can make you happier, which can alleviate solitude and regret. Shall I tell you the truth? Oh, you are too well aware of that, or you would not talk of despair. Shall I say that the time may come when happiness shall dawn upon a night of wretchedness? Why should I be a false prophet, if I said this? I do not know, except on the general principle that the evils in this world powerfully overbalance its pleasures; how, then, could I be justified in saying this? You will tell me to cease to think, to cease to feel, you will tell me to be anything but what I am; and I fear I must obey the command before I can talk of hope.

You indulge despair. *Why* do you so?  
.. comfort to you to say that you ought not. . .

Wherefore, then, do I ask, *why* you indulge despair?

I will tell you to cease to think, to feel; I will tell you to be anything but what you are; and I fear you must obey. . . before you can talk. . .



I find there can be bigots in philosophy as well as in religion; I, perhaps, may be classed with the former. I *have* read your letter attentively. Yet *all* religionists *do* judge of philosophers in the way which you reprehend; faith is one of the highest moral virtues—the foundation, indeed, upon which all others must rest; and religionists think, that he who has neglected to *cultivate* this, has not performed *one-third* of the moral duties, as Bishop Warburton dogmatically asserts. The religionists, then, by this very *Faith*, without which they could not be religionists, think the most virtuous philosopher must have neglected one-third of the moral duties.

If, then, a religionist, the *most* amiable of them, regards the best philosopher as *far* from being virtuous, has not a philosopher reason to suspect the amiability of a system which inculcates so glaringly uncharitable opinions? Can a being, amiable to a high degree, possessed, of course, of judgment, without which amiability would be in a poor way, hold such opinions as these? Supposing even, they were supported by reason, they ought to be suspected as leading to a conclusion *ad absurdum*; since, however, they combine irrationality and absurdity with effects on the mind most opposite to retiring amiability, are they not to be *more* than suspected? Take any system of religion, lop off all the disgusting excrescences, or rather adjuncts, retain virtuous precepts, qualify selfish dogmas, (I would even allow as much irrationality as amiability could swallow; but uncombined with immorality and self-conceit); do all this, and I will say, it is a system which can do no harm, and, indeed, is highly requisite for the vulgar. But perhaps it is best for the latter that they should have it as their fathers gave it them; that the amiable, the inquiring should reject it altogether.

Yet, I will allow that it *may* be consistent with amiability, when amiability does not know the deformity of the wretched errors, and that they *really* are as we behold them. I cannot judge of a system by the flowers which are scattered here and there; you omit the mention of the *weeds*, which grow so high that few botanists can see the flowers; and those who *do* gather the latter are frequently, I fear, tainted with the pestilential vapour of the former.

[There is no alteration in the paragraph which follows.]

.. bigots in atheism.

Yet all Christians...

.. and Christians think.

The Christians, then...

.. they could not be Christians...

If, then, a Christian... the best Atheist...  
.. has not an Atheist...

Take Christianity, lop off all the disgusting excrescences, or rather adjuncts, retain virtuous precepts, qualify selfish dogmas, yet I will allow that it would be consistent, when amiability does not know the deformity of the metal which it really is as we behold it.

A religionist, I will allow, may be more amiable than a philosopher, although in one instance reason is allowed to sleep, that amiability may watch. Yet, my dear friend, this is not Intolerance, nor can that odious system stand excused on this ground, as its very principle revolts against the dear modesty which suggests a dereliction of reason in the other instance. I again assert—nor, perhaps, are you prepared to deny, much as your amiable motive might prompt you to wish it—that religion is too often the child of cold prejudice and selfish fear. Love of a Deity, of Allah, Bramah (it is all the same), certainly springs from the latter motive; is this *love*? You know too well, it is not. Here I appeal to your own heart, your own feelings. At that tribunal I feel that I am secure. I once could almost *tolerate* intolerance—it then merely injured me once; it merely deprived *me* of all that I cared for, touching myself, on earth; but now it has done more, and I cannot forgive.

Eloisa said, "I have hated myself, that I might love thee, Abelard." When I hear a religionist prepared to say so, as her sincere sentiments, I then will allow that in a *few* instances the virtue of religion is separable from the vice.

She is *not* lost for ever. Now I hope that may be true; but I fear I can never ascertain, I can never influence an amelioration, as she does not any longer permit a "*philosopher*" to correspond with her. She talks of duty to her Father. And this is your amiable religion!

You will excuse my raving, my dear friend; you will not be severe upon my hatred of a cause which can produce such an effect as this. You talk of the dead; do we not exist after the tomb? It is a natural question, my friend, when there is nothing in life: yet it is one on which you have never told me any *solid* grounds for your opinions.

You shall hear from me again soon. I send some verses. I heard from F. yesterday. All that he said was; My letters are arrived.—G. S. F.

My dear friend, your affectionate

P. B. SHELLEY.

A Deist... than an atheist...

. this is not Christianity...

religion is the child...

Love of God, of Christ, and the H[oly] G[host.] (it is all the same)...

I once could tolerate Christ; he then merely... (etc. *he* for *it*.)

a Christian...

an atheist...

And this is your religion!

I know you will not be severe.

you have never told me your opinions

Faber.

G. S. Faber.

CUCKFIELD, 2 June, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have nothing to tell you, which you will like to hear. The affected contempt of narrowed intellects for the exertion of mental powers, which they either will not, or cannot comprehend, is always a tale of disgust. What must it be, when involving a keen disappointment? I have hesitated for three days on what I should do, what I should say. I am your friend, you acknowledge it. You have chosen me, and we are inseparable; not the little tyranny of idiots can affect it; not the misrepresentations of the interested. You are then my friend. I am sensible, and you must be sensible, that it is in conformity to the most rigid duty that I would advise you, how I have combated with myself.

.. that I would advise you.

What is Passion? The very word implies an incapacity for action, otherwise than in unison with its dictates. What is reason? It is a thing independent, inflexible; it adapts thoughts and actions to the varying circumstances, which for ever change—adapts them so as to produce the greatest overbalance, of happiness. And to whom do you *now* give happiness? Not to others, for you associate with but few: those few regard you with the highest feelings of admiration and friendship; but perhaps there is but one;—and here is self again—not to yourself; for the truth of this I choose *yourself*, as a testimony against you. I think; reason; listen; cast off prejudice; hear the dictates of plain common sense—surely is it not evident? I loved a being, an idea in my own mind, which had no real existence. I concreted this abstract of perfection, I annexed this fictitious quality to the idea presented by a *name*; the being, whom that name signified, was by no means worthy of this. —This is the truth: unless I am determinedly blind—unless I am resolved causelessly and selfishly to seek destruction, I must see it. Plain! is it not plain? I loved a being; the being whom I loved, is not what she was; consequently, as love appertains to mind and not body, she exists no longer, I regret when I find that she never existed, but in my mind; yet does it not border on wilful deception, deliberate, intentional self-deceit, to continue

.. independent and inflexible.

for you know but few.

You loved a being, an idea in your own mind. You concreted this abstract of perfection, you annexed. . .

This is truth: unless you are determinedly blind — unless you are resolved causelessly and selfishly to seek destruction, you must see it. . .

to love the body, when the soul is no more? As well might I court the worms which the soulless body of a beloved being generates—be lost to myself, and to those who love me for what is really amiable in me—in the damp, unintelligent vaults of a charnel-house.

You loved a being. the being whom you loved. . . You regret when you find that she never existed, but in your mind;

As well might you court the worms which the soulless body of a beloved being generates — be lost to yourself, and to those who admire you for what is really amiable in you. inert mass.

Surely, when it is carried to the dung-heap as a mass of putrefaction, the loveliness of the flower ceases to charm. Surely it would be irrational to annex to this inertness the properties which the flower in its state of beauty possessed, which now cease to exist, and then *did* merely exist, because adjoined to it. Yet you will call this *cold reasoning*? No; you will not! this would be the exclamation of the uninformed Werter, not of my noble friend. But, indeed, it is not *cold reasoning*, if you saw me at this moment. I wish I could reason coldly, I should then stand more chance of success. But let me reconsider it myself—exert my own reasoning powers; let me entreat myself to awake. Thus—I do not know what I say.

this was the exclamation.

exert your own reasoning powers; let me entreat yourself to awake.

I go to Field-place; to-morrow you shall hear again. I go to Field-place now: this moment, I have rung the bell for the horse.

Your eternal Friend.

I wrote to her to entreat that she would receive my letter kindly; I wrote very long. This is the answer. Are you deaf, are you dead? I am cold and icy, but I cannot refrain. Stay, I will come soon.—Adieu!

your letter

Stay, do not come soon.

LONDON, August 15, 1811.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The late perplexing occurrence which called me to town, occupies my time, engrosses my thoughts. I shall tell you more of it when we

meet which I hope will be soon. It does not, however, so wholly occupy my thoughts but that you and your interests still are predominant.

I have a rival in my sister's affections, do not tremble for it is not one whom I have occasion to dread, if I fear merely those who are likely to be successful. His chances of success are equal to my own. He has the opportunity of frequently being and conversing with Elizabeth, yet his conversation is not such as is likely to produce any alteration in the resolve which she has taken, not to encourage his addresses. It is J. G. she knows him well and has known him long. Charles informed me of it, and I left London yesterday, though now returned purposely to converse with my sister on the subject. J. G. is certainly not a favoured lover, nor ever will be. I thought she appeared rather chagrined at the intelligence she fears that she will lose an entertaining acquaintance, who sometimes enlivens her solitude, by his conversion into the more serious character of a lover. I do not think she will, as his attachment is that of a cool unimpassioned selector of a companion for life. I do not think the better of my cousin for this unexpected affair.

I could tell you something, and will; you will then coincide with me. This, however, is an object of secondary importance. I know, from what I tell you, that others might be elevated by hope, but I would say to them—Beware, for although her rejection of the bare idea of G. was full and unequivocal, I have no reason to suppose that it proceeded from any augmented leniency for another. I know how deep is the gulf of despair, and I will not therefore increase any one's height, but must still think how unfortunate it is for any wooer that he ever heard her very name, he must long for the time when he will forget her, but which he now will say can never come.

You have a rival  
it is not one whom  
you have occasion to dread, if  
you fear  
to your own.

It is John Grove.

John Grove.

that you might be  
elevated by  
hope, yet  
Beware,

I will not then  
increase your  
height, but must  
still think how  
unfortunate it is  
you ever mentioned her very  
name, still  
must I long for  
the time when  
you will forget  
her, but which  
now you say can  
never come!

[The rest of the letter is unchanged.]

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